Tanong ng Bayan / A26

Dagdag sa VAT: Kailangan nga ba?

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■ World / A9

'People Power' topples Lebanese gov't; PM resigns

■ News / A2

Joker wants gov't men in SMC fired

■ Sports / A25

US boxing editors favor Morales over Pacquiao 54-51

■ Motoring / F1

Presenting RP's 1st Car of the Year awardees

Pray for Pope, don't speculate on successor, Catholics told

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

DAGUPAN CITY—Mincing no words, Archbishop Oscar Cruz asked Catholics yesterday to stop speculating on who would succeed Pope John Paul II and said they should instead pray for his recovery.

PRAY/ A20

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS V

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Wednesday, March 2, 2005 ★★★ 70 pages / 7 sections / Vol. 20 / No. 84 P18

Surprise! Senate OKs nat'l budget

Each senator to get P120-M pork barrel

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and TJ Burgonio

A DAY after expressing her displeasure over the failure of Congress to pass the proposed national budget, President Macapagal-Arroyo got what she wanted—a new P907.56-billion outlay for 2005.

The new budget provides for P120 million in pork barrel funds for each senator, down from P200 million, and a P40-million allocation for every member of the House of Representatives, down from P70 million.

In an unprecedented move, the Senate junked last night its own version of the budget and adopted in toto the 2005 budget proposed by the President and approved by the House of Representatives.

Senate President Franklin Drilon said Malacañang was "pleasantly surprised" by the development, which would pave the way for the immediate signing of the budget.

Asked if Malacañang had set a date for the signing, Drilon said: "No, they are still recovering from their pleasant surprise."

He said the Senate secretary general had communicated the

SURPRISE!/ A21

BAREFOOT AT THE PALACE

President Arroyo, herself garbed in a tribal costume, welcomes one of the indigenous peoples of southern and eastern Mindanao during the induction on Tuesday of provincial and city consultative chairpersons of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples. EDWIN BACASMAS

Airlines, shipping exempt from VAT

By Cynthia D. Balana, Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Michael Lim Ubac

THE HOUSE of Representatives lifted the value-added tax (VAT) exemptions of certain goods and services like petroleum products and electricity but inserted a provision giving more incentives to the shipping and airlines industries, Deputy Minority Leader and Iloilo Rep. Rolex Suplico said yesterday.

The chamber approved House Bill No. 3705 on third and final reading on Monday night by a vote of 156-30-3.

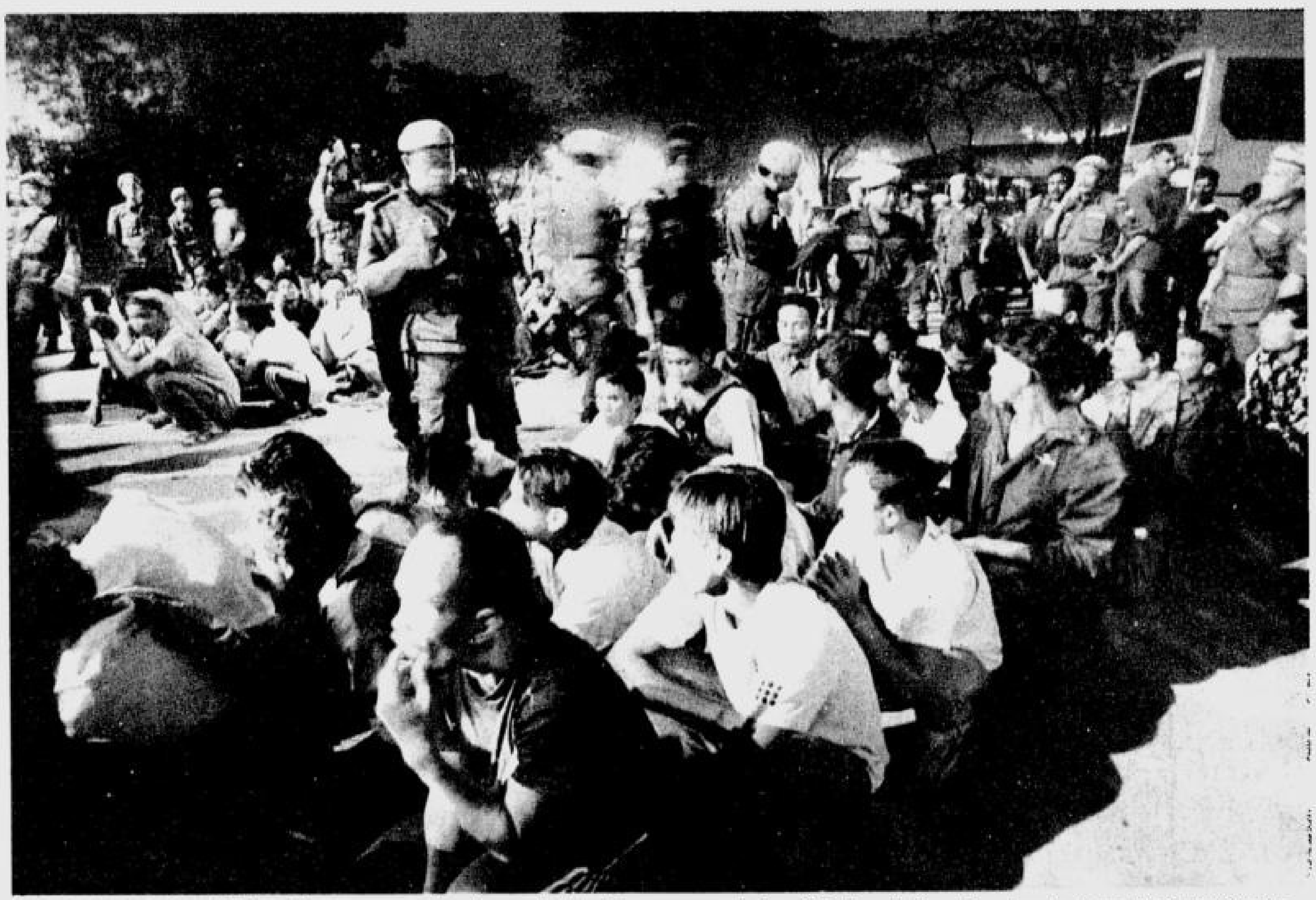
Other legislators are raising a howl over the "no pass-on" provision, which requires power and oil firms to absorb the VAT.

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero called the provision a "hoax," saying that power and oil firms could still pass on the tax to consumers.

The bill has no clause specifying sanctions to be imposed on independent power producers (IPPs) and oil firms that would pass on the VAT to consumers, according to Escudero.

Suplico said the amended version of HB 3705 gave air and shipping industry players such as Lucio Tan, owner of Philippine

AIRLINES/ A5



LOST in Malaysia. A midnight raid on a construction site outside Kuala Lumpur rounded up 243 allegedly illegal immigrants. It was the first raid in the Malaysian authorities' controversial policy to round up, whip and deport hundreds of thousands of illegals following the end of a four-month amnesty. AFP

Don't force your sons to enter priesthood

By Christian V. Esguerra

PARENTS should never force their sons to enter the priesthood, Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz said yesterday.

Cruz said this coercive parental attitude could be a factor in the decision of certain priests to hang up their cassocks.

He said that since last year, at least 23 Filipino priests—all of them diocesan—had sought permission from the Vatican to abandon their vocation.

But the number is not actually alarming, considering that only at least 200 priests have been given dispensation in the last 20 years, according to Cruz, a former president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines.

Besides, there is no shortage of

DON'T/ A20

Malaysia starts roundup, caning of illegals

KUALA LUMPUR—Malaysia launched Tuesday a controversial operation to round up, whip and deport hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants after a 4-month amnesty ended at midnight.

In one of the earliest raids, about 400 government volunteers and immigration officials—some armed with pistols and others with nightsticks—cordoned off a construction site outside Kuala Lumpur and detained 243 foreigners.

Some of them tried to flee into a nearby jungle in the early morning darkness.

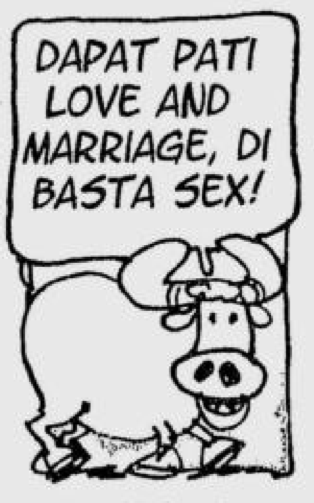
The volunteer raiders are paid 80 ringgit ($21) for each illegal caught in the nationwide operation, codenamed "Ops Tegas."

Early reports did not mention Filipinos as among those initially arrested.

In Manila, the Department of Foreign Affairs pledged to protect the rights of Filipino workers who might be arrested in the crackdown, by hiring Malaysian lawyers for them. *(See related story on Page A7).*

Indonesia and the Philippines, along with human rights groups, called for the humane treatment

MALAYSIA/ A7


DAPAT PATI LOVE AND MARRIAGE, DI BASTA SEX!

'Tell kids, parents about sex'

By Christian V. Esguerra

PLEASE, talk about sex.

Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit yesterday enjoined parents to talk to their children about sex as a way to keep the population numbers in check.

As many as 30 percent of couples in the country are unaware that having sex can result in babies, according to the health secretary.

TELL KIDS/ A22

'Selective logging like haircuts for bald men'

By Philip C. Tubeza and Blanche S. Rivera

IMPLEMENTING selective logging in the country is like prohibiting haircuts for bald people.

This was the metaphor that Bukidnon Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri employed yesterday in cautioning Environment Secretary Michael Defensor against lifting the log ban in certain regions, including natural growth forests.

Zubiri expressed "alarm" that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources was even considering the idea, and said the problem with this approach was that it "does not protect our remaining forests from the ax."

"You conserve what is still there," he said in a statement. "It will be superfluous to impose a log ban in areas where there are no more trees to cut. Limited logging is tantamount to saying: *Bawal gupitan ang kalbo, pero pwedeng gupitan ang may buhok* (Haircuts are banned for bald people but allowed for those who still have hair)."

Defensor proposed on Monday a "limited log ban," under which logging by timber license agreement holders would be allowed for two or three years but only in areas with sufficient forest cover.

SELECTIVE/ A22

GACUTAN: From Tondo to Multinational Village. MITCH MAURICIO

BAD HAIR DAY

Village resident baffles House drugs probers

By Michael Lim Ubac

NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation Director Reynaldo Wycoco yesterday said he had the "goods" on Arnel Gacutan, who is suspected to have links with the Chinese who allegedly ran shabu laboratories in a posh subdivision in Parañaque.

Wycoco told lawmakers in an executive session hearing of the House of Representatives' committee on dangerous drugs that he would divulge the "goods" on Gacutan, a former president of the Multinational Village Homeowners Association, as well as the names of other drug lords in Parañaque.

Lawmakers were baffled when Gacutan showed up at the executive session hearing because he wanted to clear his name. However, questions surrounding his links to the drug cartel persisted.

The House inquiry came after a fifth shabu laboratory was raided in the village, yielding sophisticated equipment and chemicals used to produce methamphetamine hydrochloride, or

VILLAGE/ A7

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern sections of Northern and Central Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/03/02/05

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

Joker wants gov't men in SMC fired

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo should check on the loyalty of—if not actually fire—the seven government-appointed directors in San Miguel Corp., Sen. Joker Arroyo said yesterday.

The administration senator questioned why the seven SMC directors, who are supposed to represent the government's interests in the food and beverage giant, all voted for the stock rights option that could dilute the government's 41 percent stake.

"It would be in order for the President to cause an inquiry on the conduct of the government directors in San Miguel on this matter. After all, the government directors on the board of both private and government corporations are there not as sinecures, but trustees to protect and promote the interests of the government," Senator Arroyo said in a statement.

Arroyo said the seven directors voted with the majority in the SMC board when it approved a stock rights offering to raise about P18 to P20 billion by issuing additional shares equivalent to 10 percent of its outstanding capital stock. This could affect the balance of power in the country's biggest food conglomerate and dilute the share of government, which is the biggest stockholder of SMC.

Danding rules

Controversial businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, the SMC chair, controls the 15-member SMC board through his 20-percent holdings and those of his allies, the Japan-based Kirin which has 20 percent, mall magnate Henry Sy who has 6 percent and other investors.

The government holds seven board seats, through its estimated 41 percent stake consisting of the 27-percent forfeited coco levy fund shares and the combined holdings of the two state-run pension funds.

"The government directors are there to protect and enhance the government's interests," Senator Arroyo said.

"When the SMC board makes any move that might prejudice their principals, in this case the Presidential Commission on Good Government, the Government Service Insurance System and the Social Security System, they are duty-bound to protest the move or at least get instructions on how they should vote," he said.

The seven government SMC directors are: GSIS president and general manager Winston Garcia, SSS president and CEO Corazon de la Paz and five PCGG-appointed directors—Menardo Jimenez, Leo Alvez, Octavio Victor Espiritu, Egmidio de Silva Jose and Pacifico Fajardo.

Unanimous vote

Fajardo resigned his directorship in May 2004. It could not be ascertained who replaced him.

Senator Arroyo said the seven government-appointed directors voted with the eight pro-management SMC directors resulting in a unanimous vote for the stock offering.

Their action cost the government P8 billion, he said.

The senator said the President should be commended for promptly correcting the situation.

Ms Arroyo ordered the Development Bank of the Philippines to buy SMC shares to preserve the government's stake in the company.

"This would not have happened and the government burdened with having to raise P8 billion if only the seven government directors asked for instructions on how they should vote in such an important matter," Senator Arroyo said.

Juliet Labog-Javellana

Abu faces rough sailing at CA

LAWYER Homobono Adaza said yesterday he would oppose Armed Forces chief Efren Abu's confirmation on behalf of an Army colonel who had publicly criticized the promotions system in the armed forces.

Adaza yesterday made his first move by filing a complaint with the Provost Marshal General against Abu for unbecoming an officer and a gentleman and conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline under Articles 96 and 97 of the Articles of War, respectively.

Adaza is blocking Abu's confirmation in connection with the complaint of Lt. Col. Oscarlito Mapalo, who has gone into hiding since December after he was linked to a supposed plot to destabilize the government.

"It's a case of persecution," Adaza said, adding that Abu had denied Mapalo due process.

This week, Adaza said, he will file an opposition to Abu's confirmation before the Commission on Appointments. "We'll cite the same grounds, his persecution of Colonel Mapalo," Adaza told reporters.

NOT SO FAST

Retired Gen. Jose M. Calimlim, Task Force Subic chief (left), briefs visiting Manila customs officials led by Deputy Commissioner Celso Templo (right) and Nestorio Gualberto, chief of the Customs Enforcement and Security Service, as they inspect a Formula 3 racing car from Japan, which was discovered inside a container. The container was declared to be loaded only with $2,000 worth of automotive spare parts.

Soriquez files libel suit against DPWH accuser

By D.J. Yap

ERSTWHILE Secretary Florante Soriquez of the Department of Public Works and Highways has filed a P10-million libel suit against the DPWH official who had accused him of weak leadership and impropriety and successfully caused his ouster from the top public works post.

Soriquez, who served as acting public works secretary for one year and 10 months, accused Assistant Secretary Raul Asis of disseminating false and malicious statements about him while President Macapagal-Arroyo was "in the midst of choosing a permanent secretary of the department."

The President eventually removed Soriquez and replaced him with National Security Adviser Hermogenes Ebdane Jr.

She did not sack him, however, but returned him to his former post as public works undersecretary.

In the complaint he filed in the Quezon City prosecutor's office, Soriquez cited a Feb. 8 press conference where Asis supposedly read and distributed an "official statement" that the former acting secretary claimed contained false and malicious remarks.

In the statement titled "DPWH Top Executives Call for Soriquez Ouster," Asis said he was speaking for "Group 27" which was composed of key public works officials disenchanted with Soriquez's performance.

The statement accused Soriquez of demanding P50,000 a month from each of the 16 DPWH regional directors purportedly for his personal image-building. It also charged that Soriquez was "degrading the professionalism" of the department by designating unqualified engineers to certain offices.

The statement mentioned other charges against Soriquez, particularly Agusan del Sur Rep. Rodolfo Plaza's accusation that he had accepted P210 million in kickbacks from DPWH district officers.

Plaza alleged that Soriquez had also demanded P50,000 monthly from the DPWH's 173 districts, a 15-percent "cash outlay" from government projects, and a 5-percent share from foreign-assisted projects.

Soriquez has denied the charges, now under investigation by the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission upon Ms Arroyo's orders.

Soriquez said Asis' statement was malicious not only because it was false "but also because of its timing."

If Asis' intentions were honest, said Soriquez, he should have filed the necessary criminal and administrative complaints, being the chair of the DPWH grievance committee.

Soriquez also said that several of the DPWH officials in the statement had not authorized Asis to use their names.

Asis could not be immediately reached for comment.

Families of ferry victims want memorial

By Leila B. Salaverria

ALL they want is a memorial for their loved ones.

Families of the SuperFerry 14 bombing victims, whose bodies remain missing, have called on government officials and management of the shipping line, to help them realize a project to build a memorial for their relatives.

Edward Leyco, who lost his mother in the Feb. 27 incident last year, said the victims' kin would write to the National Disaster Coordinating Council, members of Congress and SuperFerry management to make their request official.

"The request is very simple. All the families want is a common mausoleum or memorial for the victims whose remains have yet to be found," Leyco said in a phone interview.

According to Leyco, the letter will be signed by Roberto Bandarlirpe, who will be representing the families. Bandarlirpe lost a wife and a child in the fire.

A total of 116 passengers were reported missing by the National Bureau of Investigation right after the explosion carried out by the extremist Abu Sayyaf. But the SuperFerry 14 management had said only 111 passengers had relatives looking for them.

The last reported count of victims who had been identified was 62, based on the figures from the NBI, which had been tasked to identify the remains recovered from the ship.

With over 800 people on board, the 10,000-ton Superferry 14 was on its way to Bacolod and Cagayan de Oro from Manila when it caught fire last year after an explosion. The Abu Sayyaf, who is being linked to regional terror group Jemaah Islamiyah and Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network, had claimed responsibility for the bombing.

Leyco said the Superferry management should play a part in helping the families realize their project. "I believe it is their moral obligation," he said.

The victims' families would also ask authorities to spare from cremation the bones recovered from the ship but which until now have not been identified, he said.

The group suggested that these bones be buried in a common grave or memorial that will be built for the victims whose bodies were never found, Leyco added.

He said the victims perished in a fire and putting the bones in flames again would be very painful for their relatives.

Last Sunday, several relatives of the victims traveled to Sisiman Bay in Mariveles, Bataan, to offer flowers and prayers on the first death anniversary of their loved ones.

Former cop chief probed for killing of journalist

By Armand N. Nocum

JUSTICE Secretary Raul Gonzalez has ordered the investigation of the former police chief of Pagadian City for allegedly impeding the investigation into the killing of broadcast journalist Edgar Damalerio on May 13, 2002.

In a press briefing, Gonzalez said that former Supt. Asuri Hawari, now a consultant to the mayor in Pagadian, will be subjected to preliminary investigation and would be included in the charge sheet if there was probable cause.

Gonzalez's order came after meeting with officials of the Freedom Fund for Filipino Journalists Inc., which is pushing for the resolution of media killings.

The FFFJ told Gonzalez yesterday that Hawari allegedly attempted to hamper the investigation by presenting a "bogus witness" who tagged another suspect in Damalerio's killing instead of PO1 Guillermo Wapile, the prime suspect.

Wapile, who escaped from detention in 2003 but surrendered to the police on Sept. 13, 2004, was charged with the murder of Damalerio before the regional trial court in Zamboanga on Nov. 18, 2002.

Gonzalez promised to give "full support" to efforts to prosecute the killer of Damalerio as well as others responsible for the killings of journalists in the country.

"We consider attacks of this nature as attacks against democracy," he said, adding that the Department of Justice will continue to give full protection to the witnesses and relatives of Damalerio.

Gonzalez has also asked the Supreme Court to effect the transfer of the hearing on the Damalerio case from Mindanao to Cebu. "We are doing this to ensure that witnesses are not killed or murdered in relation to heinous crimes," he said.

Two of the three witnesses in the Damalerio slaying had already been killed by unknown assailants.

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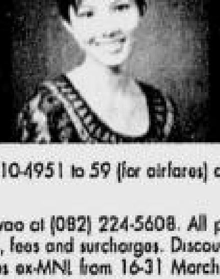

Gov't launches nationwide hunt for 'Boy Negro'

By Juan Escandor Jr.,
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau,
and Luige A. del Puerto in Manila

LIBMANAN, Camarines Sur—Intelligence and police operatives have launched a manhunt for "Boy Negro," the third suspect in the Valentine's Day bombing in Makati City, who eluded arrest when authorities swooped down on his house in Barangay Mambulo Nuevo here at 11:30 a.m. on Monday.

A composite team of the Military Intelligence Group, National Bureau of Investigation and Philippine National Police yesterday continued pursuit operations against the suspect identified as Gappal Bana, also known as "Boy Negro" and Kenred Santos.

Supt. Renato Gumban, Bicol regional intelligence officer based in Camp Gen. Simeon Ola, said Bana sustained gunshot wounds in the left hip during a brief firefight with arresting officers who were to serve an arrest warrant on the suspect who managed to escape toward the forested areas of Pasacao and San Vicente complex in Camarines Sur.

Police had earlier tagged a certain "Maidan" a.k.a. "Boy Negro" as the supplier of the explosives which Muslim extremists used in the Makati bus bombing which killed four people and injured several others.

Authorities were able to trace the whereabouts of "Boy Negro" through a certain Cyril Daza, the suspect's 19-year-old wife, a resident of Sitio Olivan.

Operatives then swooped down on the suspect's house but the latter shot it out with the apprehending officers and managed to escape.

Witnesses said the fleeing bombing suspect was seen bleeding.

At about 1 p.m. on Monday, the bombing suspect was again spotted somewhere in San Ramon, a neighboring village south of Mambulo Nuevo.

In Manila, National Capital Region Police Office chief Director Avelino Razon confirmed that "Boy Negro" eluded arrest during the raid in Camarines Sur.

"Yes, but he was able to go away," Razon told the INQUIRER.

Senior Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil said "Boy Negro" had apparently hidden in Barangay Mambulo Nuevo, Libmanan, Camarines Sur.

"He was about to be served an arrest warrant when he shot it out," Bataoil said, quoting Bicol Region chief Chief Supt. Restituto Mosqueda.

"There was an exchange of gunfire and he was wounded," he said.

According to Daza, her husband was sitting on the stairs of her father's house when suddenly a man with a gun called him with "*Hoy*!"

Sensing danger, she said, her husband, whom she knew as Kim Red Santos, 24, immediately stood up and ran inside the house, went through the kitchen and escaped through the back door.

She later heard several gunshots being fired.

Daza, who became a Muslim convert when she married "Boy Negro" on March 6, 2004, and was renamed Hannah Santos, said she had no knowledge about the activities of her husband.

She said "Boy Negro" went to Manila on Feb. 10 and came back on Feb. 19.

She said her husband had told her he would look for a job in Manila.

Daza said she noticed nothing unusual about her husband, except that he never talked about things beyond their relationship.

She said they used to live with his aunt in Maharlika Village in Taguig.

Daza said she was working as a sales attendant at Del's Bakery in Western Taguig when they became textmates for three months in 2003.

With a report from Michael B. Jaucian, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Cops charge Moro leader for Sulu raid

POLICE said Tuesday they would charge a Moro rebel leader and his fighters for attacks last month that set off fierce clashes, killing 70 people and displacing more than 30,000 villagers.

Government troops continued to hunt down Habir Malik and up to 300 of his men, who had fled in small groups after soldiers captured their major encampment near Panamao town in Jolo two weeks ago, officials said.

Police Director Vidal Querol said charges of murder, attempted murder and arson would be filed this week against Malik and his men for attacking an Army detachment in Panamao, killing a soldier, wounding two civilians and setting houses ablaze.

The Feb. 7 attack provoked a major offensive by more than 3,000 troops that left 30 soldiers and more than 40 gunmen dead in fierce fighting in Panamao and outlying towns.

The clashes have largely subsided, but thousands of villagers have refused to return home, fearing a resurgence of violence with continuing military operations.

Armed Forces chief of staff Gen. Efren Abu flew to Jolo Tuesday on orders of President Macapagal-Arroyo to assess whether or not the government should forge a ceasefire with Malik's group. Local officials had appealed to Ms Arroyo to declare a truce.

During a talk with about 300 soldiers and Marines, Abu gave no hint of what he would propose to the President—a truce or continued operations against Malik's group.

But he asked the troops loudly, "Are you still raring to fight? Are you still brave?" And the men replied equally as loud: "Yes, sir."

Charges against Malik would be filed despite a possible truce, Querol said.

"Their criminal activities could not be wiped out by a ceasefire. Justice must be rendered to the victims," Querol told The Associated Press by telephone.

Army Brig. Gen. Agustin Demaala, commander of troops on Jolo, backed Querol, saying Malik and his men should be punished.

"No one is above the law," he said.

The long-jailed leader of the rebels, Nur Misuari, would not be charged because investigators have not found any evidence or witnesses to back allegations by some government officials that he had ordered the attacks, Querol said.

The rebels said they had wanted to avenge the shooting deaths of three civilians—allegedly including a child—by troops who had barged into a community of Misuari followers while pursuing suspected rebels from the al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf group.

Misuari formerly headed the Moro National Liberation Front, a large Muslim separatist group that accepted limited autonomy and signed a peace accord with the government in 1996.

But violence flared up again years later and Misuari was imprisoned on charges of rebellion.

AP

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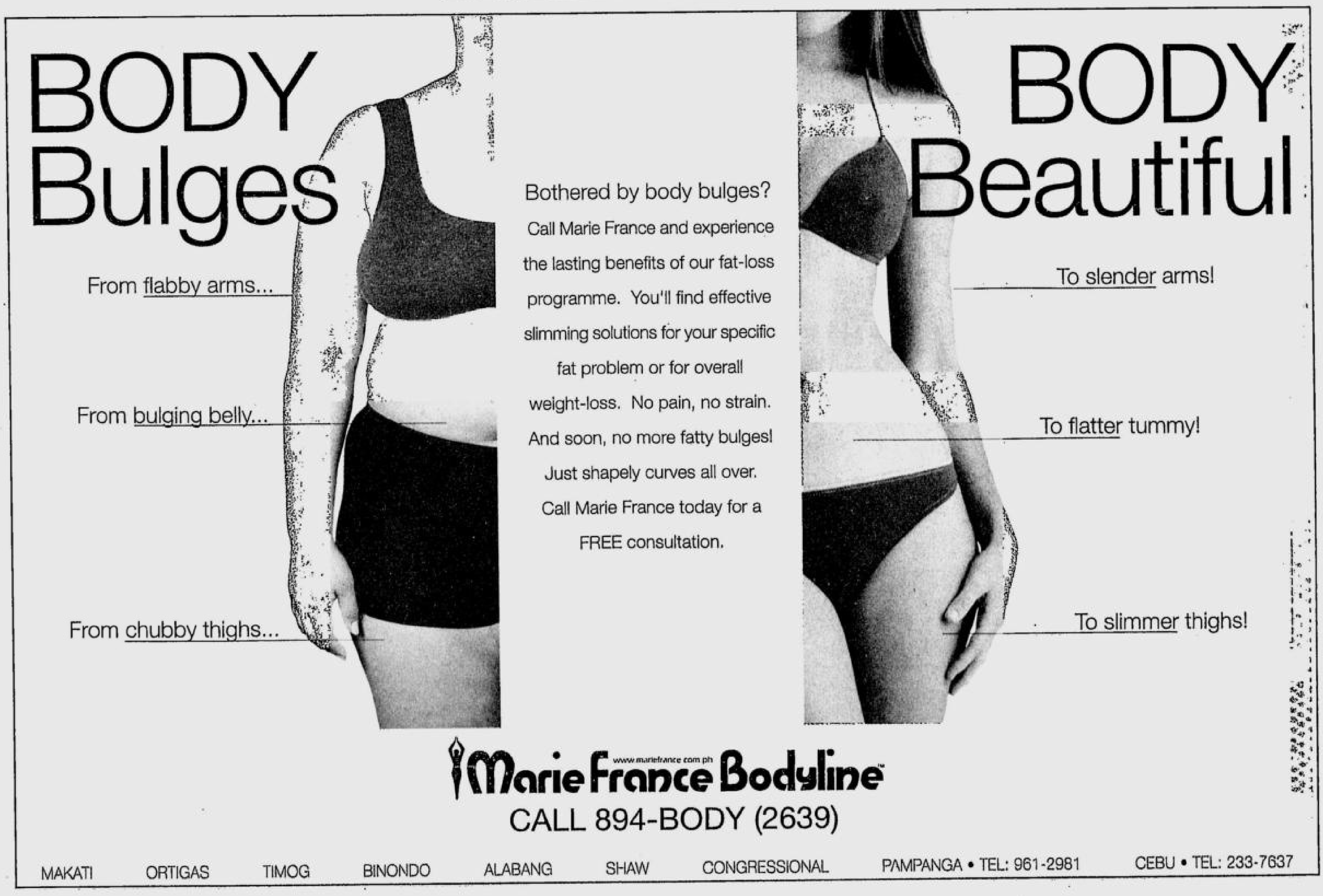
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‘Way Kurat’ blinks in face of threats

By Philip C. Tubeza

ZAMORA

"WAY KURAT" blinks.

Compostela Valley Rep. Manuel Zamora yesterday said he would have to go into hiding after allegedly receiving death threats from gold miners in Mt. Diwalwal.

The squabbles and intrigues in the gold rush have apparently worsened so much that even former military intelligence chief Gen. Victor Corpus, head of the government agency overseeing the mining activities, confronted Zamora on Wednesday about reports that he had hired gunmen to kill Corpus.

“This is serious... I'd rather be a living coward than a dead hero,” Zamora said in a press conference.

Zamora said he suspected illegal miners and their protectors in military intelligence to be behind the threats against him and the reported plot against Corpus.

He said he planned to skip sessions at the House of Representatives until those who were after him are identified or “until such time that my colleagues will be able to help me.”

Zamora said he did not feel safe in Congress and that he would also have to move around in different safehouses. He said he would also stop going to Congress on his bicycle.

“They only make monuments for you when you're dead,” Zamora said.

He said he had asked help from the President's son, Rep. Mikey Arroyo, to get more security escorts. But up to yesterday, Zamora said he had yet to get additional security detail.

He said Armed Forces chief of staff Gen. Efren Abu told him that he had yet to receive Zamora's request.

Zamora said he learned about the alleged plan to kill him in August after he was alerted by Monkayo Vice Mayor Avenido Cabag.

Cabag told him that there was a P2-million price on his head and that of Councilor Gerry Cajes and a civilian named Rolando Baguio.

Two weeks after the call, Baguio's security guard was shot dead. In November, Councilor Cajes was shot in the nape but he survived.

Then on Wednesday, Zamora received a call from Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri who told the congressman that he was allegedly involved in a plot to kill Corpus.

Zamora said he met Corpus later that day at the office of Speaker Jose de Venecia, where the retired general confronted him about a “military intelligence report” that Zamora and three other officials had hired 12 gunmen to kill Corpus.

The other officials allegedly involved in the plot were Compostela Gov. Jose Caballero, provincial board member Arthur Uy and Tagum Mayor Rey Uy.

Zamora said he vehemently denied the intelligence report and told Corpus that he had no quarrel with him. He said the general only nodded and then ominously said: “*Kung ganun... hindi ako magpapa-una* (If that's the case, I won't be the first one.)”

“It was then that I was alarmed... I told him that maybe the intelligence report was wrong, I have nothing against Gen. Corpus,” Zamora said.

He said that his detractors might be trying to drive a wedge between him and Corpus, head of the National Resources and Development Corporation, which is overseeing mining activities in Mt. Diwalwal.

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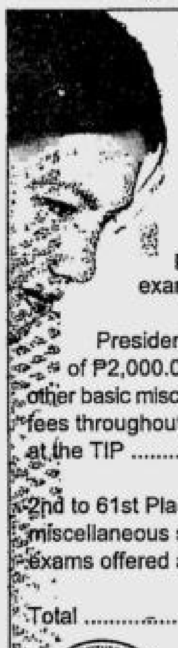

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2nd to 61st Placers - Outlay of ₱171,000 for each of the sixty (60) scholars to cover tuition and other basic miscellaneous school fees throughout the course in any of the four- or five-year programs requiring board exams offered at the TIP ....₱10,260,000.00

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2nd to 51st Placers - Outlay of ₱125,400.00 for each of the fifty (50) scholars to cover tuition and other basic miscellaneous school fees throughout the Accountancy program at TIP Manila ....₱6,270,000.00

52nd to 131st Placers - Outlay of ₱13,630.00 for each of the eighty (80) scholars to cover tuition and other basic miscellaneous school fees for one (1) semester in the Accountancy program at TIP Manila ....₱1,090,400.00

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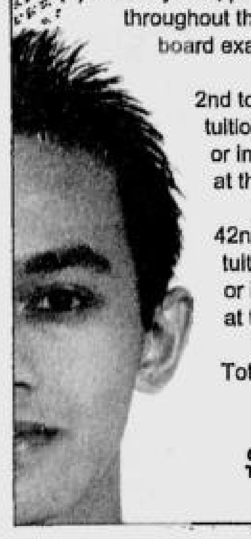
1st Placer - Outlay of ₱50,000.00 to cover fifty (50) monthly stipends of ₱1,000.00 per month through five (5) school years, plus an outlay of ₱171,000.00 to cover tuition and other basic miscellaneous fees throughout the Architecture program or in any four- or five-year Engineering program requiring board examinations offered at the TIP ....₱221,000.00

2nd to 41st Placers - Outlay of ₱171,000.00 for each of the forty (40) scholars to cover tuition and other basic miscellaneous school fees throughout the Architecture program or in any four- or five-year Engineering program requiring board examinations offered at the TIP ....₱6,840,000.00

42nd to 101st Placers - Outlay of ₱13,500.00 for each of the sixty (60) scholars to cover tuition and other basic miscellaneous school fees for one (1) semester in Architecture or in any four- or five-year Engineering program requiring board examinations offered at the TIP ....₱810,000.00

Total ....₱7,871,000.00



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DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION:
■ Pres. Elpidio Quirino Friday, March 4, 2005
■ Gov. Demetrio Quirino, Sr. Friday, March 11, 2005
■ Sec. Guillermo De Vega Friday, March 18, 2005

SCHEDULE OF EXAMINATIONS:
■ Pres. Elpidio Quirino Saturday, March 5, 2005
■ Gov. Demetrio Quirino, Sr. Saturday, March 12, 2005
■ Sec. Guillermo De Vega Saturday, March 19, 2005

■ TIME AND PLACE OF EXAMINATIONS:
9:00-11:00 AM, TIP MANILA AND TIP QUEZON CITY

OTHER ENTRANCE SCHOLARSHIPS AND DISCOUNTS

	CATEGORY	GRANTS	PERIOD COVERED
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		₱1,000.00 Stipend per Semester	2 Semesters
1.2	Salutatorian	Free Tuition and Basic Miscellaneous Fees	2 Semesters
		₱1,000.00 Stipend per Semester	1 Semester
1.3	3rd-10th Ranking High School Graduate	Free Tuition and Basic Miscellaneous Fees	1 Semester
2.	OTHER DISCOUNTS BASED ON GENERAL AVERAGE IN 4TH YEAR HIGH SCHOOL OR FINAL GRADE IN MATH IV, ENGLISH IV, OR SCIENCE IV		
2.1	90% or above	Free Tuition and Basic Miscellaneous Fees	1 Semester
2.2	85% - 89%	Free Tuition Fee	1 Semester
2.3	83% - 84%	80% Discount on Tuition Fee	1 Semester
2.4	81% - 82%	60% Discount on Tuition Fee	1 Semester
2.5	80%	50% Discount on Tuition Fee	1 Semester

Airlines, shipping ...

From page A1

Airlines (PAL), and the Aboitiz clan, which is engaged in shipping, zero VAT.

Under the bill, shipping and airline companies could avail themselves of tax credits, according to Suplico.

He said the bill expanded the zero-rated status from "services rendered to vessels engaged exclusively in international shipping" in the original law to "services rendered to vessels or aircraft engaged in international shipping or international air transport operations, including leases of property for the use thereof."

He mentioned other new exemptions:

- Importation or lease of passenger or cargo vessels and cargo, including engine, equipment and spare parts, for domestic or international transport.
- Importation of fuel, goods and supplies by vessels and aircraft for use in international shipping or international air transport operations.
- Sale of power generated through biomass, wind and solar energy.

"Mr. Speaker, the owners of [airline and shipping] firms are so lucky. Pity the Filipino people," Suplico said.

A PAL spokesperson said airlines were exempted from VAT and all other taxes except for the two-percent franchise tax on gross revenues, which is provided for under the law that granted them a congressional franchise.

He said he could not give added comments because he had not seen HB 3705.

Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. said the bill was expected to yield P25 billion in new money for the government.

Staggered rates

De Venecia said the bill recognized Malacañang's proposal to raise the VAT rate from 10 percent to 12 percent but also introduced reduced VAT rates as follows:

- From 10 percent to 6 percent on locally manufactured generic medicine and basic foods (sardines and mackerel, cooking oil, refined sugar, and packed noodle-based products such as *miki, misua, bihon, pancit canton* and *sotanghon*);
- From 10 percent to 8 percent on imported generic medicine and basic processed foods; and
- From zero to 4 percent on petroleum products, including the raw materials used in the manufacture, and services rendered by power generation companies, which shall be increased to 6 percent, 8 percent and 12 percent on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th year of implementation, respectively.

Liquefied petroleum gas and *pandesal* will continue to be VAT-exempt.

The bill also removed the 1.5-percent presumptive input tax on agricultural purchases of agro-processors.

But lawyers and doctors will be covered by a 10-percent VAT. This, however, can be waived if they serve the poor, like farmers, by showing a certification from appropriate government agencies.

De Venecia said the expanded VAT and the lifting of VAT exemptions provided safety nets for the poor by prohibiting sellers of petroleum products and power generation companies from passing on the VAT either directly or indirectly to consumers.

No pass-on provision

"They will be criminally liable under the penal provisions under HB 3705," De Venecia said, adding that the "no pass-on" provision for petroleum products and electricity was meant to protect the poor.

The VAT on other goods and services can be passed on to consumers.

But Bayan Muna Rep. Teodoro Casiño, who voted against HB 3705, agreed with Escudero that nothing could prevent power and oil companies from passing on the tax to consumers.

Casiño said the deregulated oil industry had no mechanism to prevent the passing on of the VAT to consumers.

Protecting poor

He introduced an amendment, later approved by the chamber, requiring several government agencies and departments to monitor and regulate the pricing of electricity and petroleum products.

"Such a provision introducing price controls and the nullification of contrary provisions in the IPP contracts are not enough to prevent oil companies and power producers, with the connivance of the executive, from drastically increasing the prices of their goods and services," Casiño said.

He said he introduced the amendments to strengthen the "pass-on" prohibition. "But I'm afraid that this is not enough to protect our people from another unnecessary and unjust tax burden," he said.

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles said a clean copy of the bill was scheduled to be transmitted to the Senate yesterday afternoon.

"We're happy with the result [of the voting]. This is a certified bill and we just acted on it. We've included safety nets and we've protected the poor," Nograles said.

Laudable

Malacañang praised the House for passing the bill.

"The House move to strengthen the VAT bill is laudable and brings us closer to our fiscal reform goals," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye.

"We hope this momentum is followed through by collective statesmanship in Congress," he said in a statement just hours after members of the House wrapped up a marathon session on the lifting of VAT exemptions.

The Senate ways and means committee has declared that it was not keen on approving Malacañang's proposal to raise the VAT rate from 10 percent to 12 percent because lifting the VAT exemptions would be enough to generate President Macapagal-Arroyo's target of P80 billion in revenues.

But Malacañang said the government needed the lifting of exemptions and the two-percentage point increase in VAT to generate more than P50 billion.

Ms Arroyo had expressed displeasure over the slow pace of legislation in the Senate not only in the passage of the VAT bill but also the 2005 budget.

Businessmen's response

Businessmen interviewed by the INQUIRER shared Malacañang's enthusiasm over the the lifting of VAT exemptions at the House.

"It would persuade more people to accept the new VAT proposal. A law that applies to all is more defensible," said Francis Chua, executive vice president of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce.

Businessman Raul T. Concepcion said that in his discussion with congressional leaders, the VAT rate increase and the lifting of exemptions were likely to be approved at the earliest by next week or at the latest before the start of Holy Week.

Concepcion urged Malacañang to stop making assurances that the VAT bills would have no impact on prices of basic goods.

Prices to rise

"That's propaganda. Prices are bound to rise," he said.

He said the government should also keep an eye on price adjustments in oligopolies (or markets with few players that dictate prices) specially in the oil industry that would start paying VAT with the enactment of the VAT reforms.

"The government must ensure that only the VAT [companies] actually pay should be passed on to consumers," Concepcion said.

VAT exemption on co-ops not lifted

By Ryan D. Rosauro
PDI Mindanao Bureau

OZAMIZ CITY—Leaders of the cooperative movement in the country heaved a sigh of relief with the decision of the House of Representatives to retain the exemptions of cooperatives from the value-added tax (VAT).

House Bill No. 3705 retains the VAT exemptions of cooperatives, except in sales by agricultural cooperatives to non-members.

Jose Loreto Procianos, secretary general of the National Confederation of Cooperatives (Natcco), attributed the retention of the VAT exemption of cooperatives to the "intense lobbying effort" by national co-op leaders.

But they are not letting their guard down.

Procianos said "the battle [to retain the exemptions] shifts to the Senate this time."

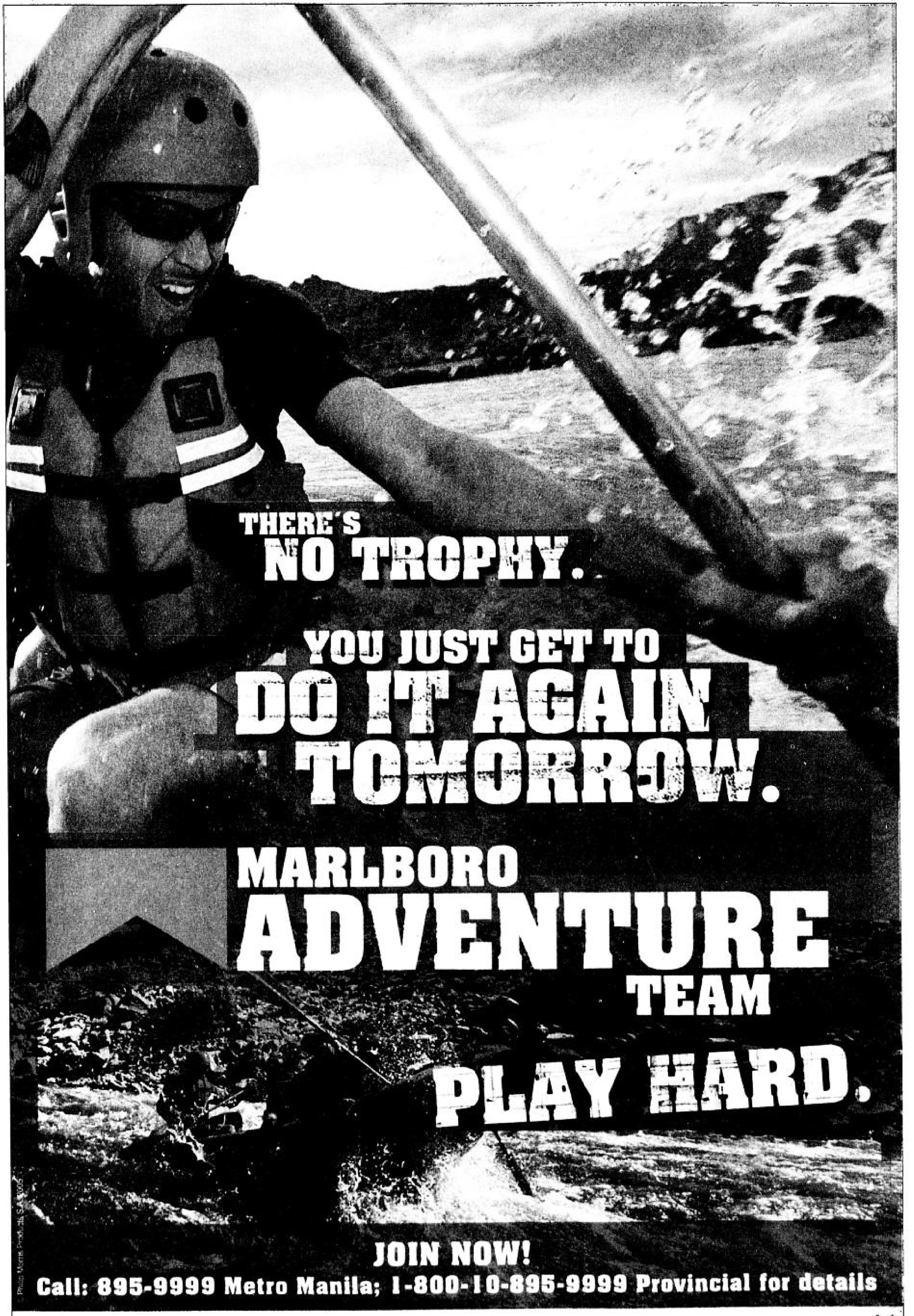
He said a protest rally would be launched Wednesday in key cities to impress upon senators the co-ops' strong opposition to a Senate proposal to lift their exemption.

Sections 61 and 62 of the Cooperative Code already subject to tax big cooperatives as well as transactions of cooperatives with non-members, he said.

Adding a new layer of taxes for cooperatives defeats the purpose of allowing the growth of self-help schemes like cooperatives as a strategy to fight poverty, he added.

"Amid the juicy incentives granted to multinational corporations, the exemptions are not even enough to level the playing field. Insisting on an additional tax levy for cooperatives is therefore unjust and anti-poor," complained Procianos.

He, however, acknowledged the need to boost the national government's revenue intake to meet its fiscal obligations.



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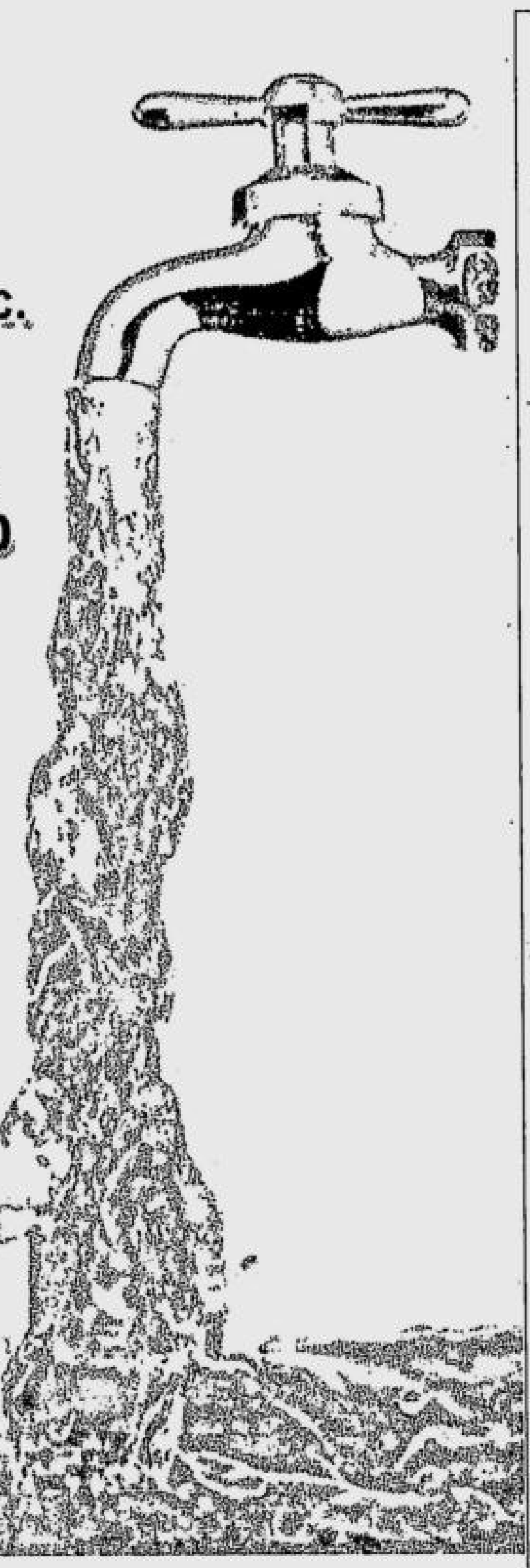

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Primary and Secondary Offer of Common Shares with Par Value of ₱1.00 per share at an Offer Price of ₱ 6.50 per share

APPLICATION NO.

This Application Form, together with the signature card, check payment and all required attachments, must be received by the Trading Participant of the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) not later than 10:00 in the morning in the case of applicants under the Small Investors Program and 11:00 in the morning in the case of clients of PSE Trading Participants both on March 8, 2005, and not later than 11:00 in the morning on March 9, 2005, if filed directly with a Domestic Underwriter. Applications received thereafter, not duly accomplished, or without the attachments specified below, will be rejected. This Application to Purchase and Subscribe form is irrevocable and, once duly accomplished and submitted, may not be withdrawn by the applicant. The Company, through the Domestic Lead Underwriter, shall have the unrestricted and unqualified right to accept or reject this Application. Applications improperly or incompletely accomplished may be rejected. In case of oversubscription, the Company, Selling Shareholders, and / or the Domestic Lead Underwriter reserve the right to allocate the Offer Shares available to the applicants in a manner they deem appropriate. Applicants are advised to read the Prospectus before subscribing to and / or purchasing the Offer Shares. Copies of the Prospectus are made available through any of the Domestic Underwriters listed in the Prospectus, any PSE Trading Participant, the PSE and the main and extension offices of the Securities and Exchange Commission. Capitalized terms used herein shall have the meaning ascribed to them in the Prospectus.

APPLICATION TO PURCHASE AND SUBSCRIBE

I / We hereby purchase and / or subscribe to Manila Water Company, Inc. ("Manila Water Company" or the "Company")'s Offer Shares under the Terms and Conditions stated herein and in the Prospectus for the Offer of such shares, as follows:

NUMBER OF SHARES	PRICE PER SHARE	TOTAL PURCHASE PRICE (Number of Shares x Price per Share)
	₱ 6.50	

* Number of shares must be for a minimum of 1,000 shares, and thereafter, in multiples of 1,000 shares. The subscription and / or purchase of the Offer Shares shall become effective only upon the actual listing of the Offer Shares on the PSE.

PAYMENT

The Offer Shares must be paid in full upon submission of the Application. Payments should be made by a check drawn against a bank in Metro Manila payable to the order of "Manila Water Company Public Offer". The check must be dated as of the date of the Application and crossed for deposit.

TYPE OF CHECK ☐ Personal ☐ Corporate ☐ Manager's / Cashier's	BANK / BRANCH	
	CHECK NO.	AMOUNT

WARRANTY

I / We represent and warrant that all information contained herein and in the attached documents are true and correct. I / We warrant having read and understood and relied solely upon the provisions of the Prospectus and the terms and conditions stated herein, and unconditionally accept said terms and conditions. I / We understand that no person has been authorized to give information or to make any representation with respect to the Offer Shares other than those specified in the Prospectus.

APPLICANT'S FULL NAME (IN PRINT)		DATE
APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE	TELEPHONE NUMBER	NATIONALITY
APPLICANT'S MAILING ADDRESS		TAX IDENTIFICATION NO.

PDTC LODGMENT / DELIVERY OF STOCK CERTIFICATES

With regard to the Offer Shares subject of this Application (the "applied Offer Shares"), an eligible Applicant shall have the choice (by checking the box of his choice below) of either (i) lodging all of the applied Offer Shares with the Philippine Depository and Trust Corp. (PDTC) or (ii) requesting for a stock certificate evidencing his ownership of such Offer Shares. Should an Applicant choose to lodge such Offer Shares with the PDTC, he should indicate so below and complete the additional information required below. Should an Applicant choose to receive a stock certificate evidencing his ownership in the applied Offer Shares, the stock certificate will then be issued and made available by the Stock Transfer Agent for pick-up by the requesting Applicant at least THREE (3) TRADING DAYS AFTER THE LISTING DATE. THE APPLICANT IS REQUIRED TO INDICATE HIS CHOICE BELOW. THE APPLICANT'S FAILURE TO INDICATE HIS CHOICE BELOW, OR THE PROVISION OF INCOMPLETE OR FALSE INFORMATION WITH REGARD TO THE APPLICANT'S CHOICE AS REQUIRED HEREIN MAY LEAD TO THE AUTOMATIC ISSUANCE OF STOCK CERTIFICATES, SUBJECT TO CERTAIN CONDITIONS DESCRIBED BELOW, WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO THE RIGHT OF THE COMPANY, SELLING SHAREHOLDER AND / OR DOMESTIC LEAD UNDERWRITER TO REJECT OR SCALE DOWN EACH APPLICATION.

- ☐ I / We want to have the applied Offer Shares lodged with the PDTC through the PDTC Participant indicated below and warrant that I / we am / are a client of such PDTC Participant
- ☐ I / We want to request for a stock certificate for the applied Offer Shares

In case no choice has been indicated, the Applicant shall be deemed to have chosen, by default, to have a stock certificate for the applied Offer Shares.

Additional information required for PDTC-lodged Offer Shares (to be completed with the assistance of the PDTC Participant appointed by the Applicant)	We confirm that we are a PDTC Participant and that the Applicant named in this Application is our *bona fide* client.
PDTC Participant Firm and PDTC Code / PDTC Sub Account Code	Authorized Signature(s) and Stamp of PDTC Participant

NOT TO BE FILLED UP BY APPLICANT

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT

This Application Form was received:

Name of Underwriter / PSE Trading Participant	Signature of Underwriter / PSE Trading Participant	Date

CONFIRMATION OF ACCEPTANCE

The Underwriter / PSE Trading Participant hereby CONFIRMS that it has SOLD unto the above-named Applicant, all of the rights, titles and interests over the following applied Offer Shares:

Total Number of Shares	Total Purchase Price	Amount of Refund, if any

Application accepted by:

Name of Underwriter / PSE Trading Participant	Signature of Underwriter / PSE Trading Participant	Date

REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS TO THIS APPLICATION

1. Corresponding check payment
2. One fully executed signature card in the form attached to this Application
   a) Applicants may obtain signature cards from PSE Trading Participants or Domestic Underwriters.

If the applicant is a Corporation, Partnership, Trust Account or Fund, this Application must be accompanied by the following documents
   a) Copy of the applicant's latest Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws and other constitutive documents as amended (if applicable),
   b) Copy of the applicant's SEC Certificate of Registration, and
   c) A duly notarized certificate of the applicant's corporate secretary which (1) sets out the resolutions of the applicant's Board of Directors authorizing the purchase of the Offer Shares applied for and specifying the authorized signatories for the purpose, (2) certifies the percentage of the applicant's capital stock held by non Filipinos, and (3) includes specimen signatures of the designated authorized signatories

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The Combined Offer. Manila Water Company, Inc. and the Selling Shareholders, through the Lead Underwriters, are offering up to 745,330,000 Offer Shares with a par value of ₱1.00 per share. Of the Offer Shares, up to 274,332,000 shares are being offered for subscription in the Philippines by the Domestic Underwriters and up to 470,998,000 shares are being offered for subscription outside the Philippines by the sole International Underwriter. Ayala Corporation, United Utilities and BPI Capital have granted the International Underwriter an option, exercisable within 30 days from the Listing Date, to purchase up to an additional 78,490,000 Common Shares to cover over allotments.

Offer Price. The Offer Shares are being offered at a price of ₱6.50 as indicated at the front of this Application to Purchase and Subscribe Form.

Domestic Offer Period. The Domestic Offer Period shall commence on 2 March 2005 and end on 9 March 2005. The Company and Domestic Lead Underwriter reserve the right to extend or terminate the Domestic Offer Period with the approval of the SEC and the PSE. Applications must be received by the Domestic Receiving Bank not later than 11:00 a.m. Manila Time on 8 March 2005 if filed through a Domestic Selling Agent, or not later than 11:00 a.m. 9 March 2005 if filed directly with a Domestic Underwriter. Applications received thereafter or without the required documents will be rejected. Applications shall be considered irrevocable upon submission to the Domestic Selling Agent or Domestic Underwriter, and shall be subject to the terms and conditions of the Offer as stated in the Prospectus and in this Application. The actual subscription and / or purchase of the Offer Shares shall become effective only upon the actual listing of the Offer Shares on the PSE.

Minimum Subscription. Each Application must be for a minimum of 1,000 Offer Shares, and thereafter, in multiples of 1,000 Offer Shares. No Application for multiples of any other number of shares shall be considered. In case an application fails to indicate the applied Offer Shares in multiples of 1,000, the entire application shall be rejected.

Listing and Trading. The Company's application for the listing of the Common Shares was approved by the PSE on 9 February 2005. All of the common shares in issue or to be issued including the Offer Shares are expected to be listed on the PSE on 18 March 2005. Trading is expected to commence on the same date.

Eligible Investors. The Offer Shares may be subscribed and / or purchased by any person of legal age who may be either a Philippine or non Philippine citizen residing in the Philippines, or any corporation, association, partnership, trust account, fund or entity resident in and organized under the laws of the Philippines and / or licensed to do business in the Philippines, subject to the unrestricted and unqualified right of the Company to reject an Application or reduce the number of Offer Shares applied for subscription or purchase if the same will cause the Company to be in breach of the Philippine ownership requirement under the Concession Agreement. Subscription to the Offer Shares in certain jurisdictions may be restricted by law. Foreign investors interested in subscribing or purchasing the Offer Shares should inform themselves of the applicable legal requirements under the laws and regulations of the countries of their nationality, residence or domicile, and as to any relevant tax or foreign exchange control laws and regulations affecting them personally. Foreign investors, both corporate and individual, hereby warrant that their purchase of the Offer Shares will not violate the laws of their jurisdiction and that they are allowed to acquire, purchase and hold the Offer Shares.

Restrictions in Ownership. Under the Concession Agreement, the Company represents and warrants to MWSS that at least 60% of its outstanding voting capital stock is owned by citizens of the Philippines or by corporations that are themselves at least 60% owned by citizens of the Philippines. The Concession Agreement also states that MWSS has determined to grant concessions to private sector corporations at least 60% of the outstanding capital stock of which is owned and controlled by Philippine nationals ("Philippine nationals" and persons referred to in the preceding sentence, "Philippine Nationals"). Accordingly, the Company has the right to disallow the issuance or the transfer of shares to persons other than Philippine Nationals and to record transfers in the books of the Company if such issuance or transfer would cause a breach of the contractual restriction on foreign ownership.

Procedure for Application. Application forms to subscribe for Offer Shares in the Domestic Offer may be obtained from any Domestic Underwriter or Domestic Selling Agent listed in the Prospectus. All Applications shall be evidenced by the application to subscribe and purchase form, duly executed in each case by an authorized signatory of the applicant and accompanied by one completed signature card, the corresponding payment for the Offer Shares covered by the Application and all other required documents. The duly executed Application and required documents should be submitted during the Domestic Offer Period to the same office where it was obtained.

Requirements for Corporate Applicants. If the applicant is a corporation, partnership, trust account or fund, the Application must be accompanied by the required documents indicated above.

Payment Terms. The Offer Shares must be paid in full upon submission of the Application. Payment should be made by a check drawn against a bank in Metro Manila to the order of "Manila Water Company Public Offer". The check must be dated as of the date of submission of the Application and crossed for deposit.

Acceptance / Rejection of Applications. The actual number of Offer Shares that an applicant will be allowed to subscribe for in the Domestic Offer is subject to the confirmation of the Domestic Underwriters. Applications shall be subject to the final approval of the Company. The Company shall have the unrestricted and unqualified right to accept or reject, in whole or in part, or reduce any Application due to any grounds specified in the Domestic Underwriting Agreement entered into by the Company, the Selling Shareholders and the Domestic Underwriters. Applications where checks are dishonored upon first presentation and Applications which do not comply with the terms of the Domestic Offer shall be rejected. Moreover, any payment received pursuant to the Application does not mean approval or acceptance by the Company of the Application. An Application, when accepted, shall constitute an agreement between the applicant and the Company for the subscription to the Offer Shares at the time, in the manner and subject to terms and conditions set forth in the Application and those described in the Prospectus. Notwithstanding the acceptance of any Application by the Domestic Underwriters or their duly authorized representatives, acting for or on behalf of the Company, the actual subscription and / or purchase by the applicant of the Offer Shares shall become effective only upon actual listing of the Offer Shares on the PSE and upon the obligations of the Domestic Underwriters and Domestic Selling Agents under the Domestic Underwriting Agreement and Domestic Purchase Agreement becoming unconditional and not being suspended, terminated or cancelled, on or before the Listing Date, in accordance with the provisions of the said agreements. If such conditions have not been fulfilled on or before the periods provided above, all application payments will be returned to the applicants without interest and, in the meantime, the said application payments will be held in a separate bank account with the Domestic Receiving Bank.

Refunds. In the event that the number of Offer Shares to be received by an applicant, as confirmed by the Domestic Underwriters, is less than the number covered by this Application, or if an Application is rejected by the Company, then the Company shall refund, without interest, within five (5) Banking Days from the end of the Domestic Offer Period, all, or a portion of the payment corresponding to the number of Offer Shares wholly or partially rejected. All refunds shall be made through the Domestic Underwriter or Domestic Selling Agent with whom the applicant has filed the Application at the latter's risk.

Issuance and Transfer Taxes. All documentary stamp taxes applicable to the original issuance of the Offer Shares and standard transfer taxes applicable to the sale of the treasury shares by the Company shall be for the sole account of the Company. The standard transfer taxes applicable to the sale of shares by the Selling Shareholders pursuant to the secondary offer shall be for the account of the Selling Shareholders.

Registration and Lodgment of Shares with the PDTC. Applicants will have a choice of either (a) lodging all of their Offer Shares with the PDTC or (b) requesting for the issuance of a stock certificate evidencing ownership of such Offer Shares. Should an applicant choose to lodge the Offer Shares with the PDTC, he or she must indicate so in the space provided in the Application and provide the additional information required for the PDTC-lodged Offer Shares, in which event, the Offer Shares will be lodged with the PDTC at least two (2) Trading Days prior to the Listing Date. Should an applicant decide to receive stock certificates evidencing their investment in the Offer Shares, the stock certificates will then be issued and made available by the Stock Transfer Agent not later than three (3) Trading Days after Listing Date. Stock certificates that remain unclaimed for a period of thirty (30) days from notice of availability of the certificates shall be dispatched by mail at the risk of the applicant. Any expense to be incurred in and only in such initial issuance of certificates shall be borne by the Company.

Restriction on Issuance and Disposal of Shares. Existing stockholders who own an equivalent of at least ten percent (10%) of the issued and outstanding common shares of the Company after the Combined Offer have agreed, as required under the Revised Listing Rules of the Exchange applicable to companies applying for listing in the PSE First Board, not to sell, assign or otherwise dispose of their common shares for a minimum period of one hundred eighty (180) days after the Listing Date. Ayala is covered by the aforesaid lock-up requirement. This lock-up does not apply to the shares subject to the over-allotment option. Except for the issuance of Offer Shares pursuant to the Combined Offer or common shares under the company's stock option plans and for distribution of common shares by way of stock dividends, the PSE will require the Company, as a condition to the listing of the common shares, not to issue new shares in its capital or grant any rights to or issue any securities convertible into or exchangeable for, or otherwise carrying rights to acquire or subscribe to, any shares in its capital or enter into any arrangement or agreement whereby any new shares or any such securities may be issued for a period of 180 days after the Listing Date. Additionally, the Company, Ayala, United Utilities and BPI Capital have each agreed with the International Underwriter that, other than in connection with the Over-Allotment Option, the Executive Stock Option Plan ("Executive SOP") Shares, and up to 1.4 million Common Shares under any other employee plan of the Company, for a period of 180 days following the Listing Date, they will not, without the written consent of the International Underwriter offer, sell or otherwise dispose of any securities of the same class as the Common Shares or any securities convertible or exchangeable for any securities of the same class as the Common Shares.

Registration of Foreign Investments. The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas requires that investments in shares of stock funded by inward remittance of foreign currency be registered with the BSP if the foreign exchange needed to service capital repatriation or dividend remittance will be sourced from the domestic banking system. The registration with the BSP of all foreign investments in the Offer Shares shall be the responsibility of the foreign investor.

Warranties by the Purchaser and / or Subscriber in the Domestic Offering with respect to restrictions under US securities regulations. The Purchaser and / or Subscriber in the Domestic Offering hereby warrants that:

(i) it is not in the United States nor is it a "U.S. Person" ("U.S. Person") as defined in Regulation S under the U.S. Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the "U.S. Securities Act") or acting for the account or benefit of a person within the United States or a U.S. Person.

(ii) it understands that the Offer Shares have not been and will not be registered under the US Securities Act or any state or other jurisdiction in the United States and, until 40 days after the latest closing date of the Offer, may not be offered, resold, pledged or transferred within the United States or to, or for the account or benefit of, U.S. Persons except in either case in accordance with Regulation S or Rule 144A under the US Securities Act.

Obligations Limited. The duties and obligations of the Domestic Lead Underwriter shall be determined solely by the express provisions of this Application to Purchase and Subscribe, and the Domestic Lead Underwriter shall not be liable except for the performance of its duties and obligations specifically set forth herein. The Domestic Lead Underwriter makes no representation or warranty nor assumes any obligation and shall be subject to no obligation or liability whatsoever under this Application to Purchase and Subscribe to the subscriber or purchaser or any other person, except that the Domestic Lead Underwriter agrees to perform such obligations and duties as are specifically set forth and undertaken by it herein without gross negligence or wilful misconduct. No implied covenants or obligations shall be read into this Application to Purchase and Subscribe against the Domestic Lead Underwriter. The Domestic Lead Underwriter makes no representation or warranty regarding the Company.

Indemnity Clause. Each purchaser and / or subscriber agrees to indemnify and hold the Company, Selling Shareholders and Domestic Lead Underwriter, their subsidiaries, affiliates, directors, officers and stockholders free and harmless from any and all losses, claims, damages, liabilities and expenses, or actions with respect thereto, arising out of or by virtue of any breach or alleged breach of the purchaser's and / or subscriber's representations, warranties or covenants, or any other matter related to the Domestic Offer. This indemnity undertaking of each purchaser and / or subscriber shall survive and remain in full force and effect notwithstanding completion of the Offer and the complete performance of the other terms and conditions of the Application to Purchase and Subscribe.

Governing Law. This agreement shall be governed by and shall be construed in accordance with the laws of the Republic of the Philippines.

RP ready to hire Malaysian lawyers to defend Pinoys

By Volt Contreras

THE DEPARTMENT of Foreign Affairs said it was prepared to hire Malaysian lawyers for Filipinos who might be arrested in Kuala Lumpur's renewed crackdown on illegal migrants.

Foreign affairs spokesperson Gilberto Asuque expressed confidence that the Malaysian sweep would "certainly be different from 2002," at least as far as it concerned Filipino migrants.

He was referring to a similarly massive operation undertaken by Malaysia three years ago, which turned thousands of Filipinos into "boat people" picked up by Philippine Navy ships.

Many returned to the country penniless and with tales of anguish and alleged human rights abuses.

Citing DFA estimates, Asuque said between 180,000 and 200,000 Filipinos were believed to be in Malaysia when that country stepped up the enforcement of immigration laws in August last year.

Around 68,000 Filipinos have since returned to the Philippines, traveling by kumpit or pump boats, and skipping immigration desks or going through official channels, he said.

As of yesterday, Day One of the renewed crackdown, the DFA had yet to receive reports that Filipinos were among those arrested, he said.

"Certainly it will be different from 2002 because we have prepared for this long before the expected end of the deadline," Asuque told reporters.

Citing an example of the DFA's preparations, Asuque said: "We have set resources to hire lawyers ... Malaysian lawyers, unless there are also Filipino lawyers who can practice there."

"The department will assure [us] that the rights of the Filipinos under Malaysian laws, as well as their rights under applicable international laws, are recognized and respected," he stressed.

Malaysia starts roundup, caning of illegals

From page A1

of detainees and urged Malaysia not to cane the illegal workers, standard punishment here for a range of crimes.

RP-Malaysia talks

Caning, administered on the buttocks, splits the skin and leaves lifelong scars.

A high-level Malaysian government team is scheduled to visit the Philippines on March 7 to thresh out the mechanics for the repatriation and reemployment of Filipino migrants, particularly in Sabah.

The first meeting of the Philippine-Malaysia Joint Committee on Sabah Repatriates is designed to resolve the problem of illegal migration between the two countries, according to Labor Undersecretary Manuel Imson.

Imson said the committee would discuss mechanisms for the repatriation of undocumented Filipinos and the processing of their papers so they could be reemployed in Malaysia.

Curbing illegal migration

The committee will also discuss how Philippine and Malaysian agencies can effectively monitor cross-border movements and illegal migration.

Last week, officials from the foreign affairs and social welfare departments went to Malaysia to clarify matters regarding the crackdown on illegal aliens.

Malaysian Human Resources Minister Datuk Dr. Fong Chan Onn told the Philippine group that Kuala Lumpur viewed the issue of undocumented workers as "more of a human problem" and gave assurances that deported Filipinos would be reemployed.

Backbone of menial force

Forty among the immigrants who failed to produce proper documents during Tuesday's raid were taken to a detention center pending trial where they face fines, caning or jail, said Mohamad Radzi Hussein, an official who led the raid.

Malaysia offered illegal workers a chance to return home without facing any penalties in an amnesty that started last October and expired on Monday.

Some 400,000 illegal workers departed, but Malaysian officials said about half a million remained.

Foreign workers from Indonesia, Philippines, Bangladesh and India form the backbone of Malaysia's menial work force, sustaining the construction industry and plantations.

They also work in restaurants and do other low-paying jobs that Malaysians won't take. Besides illegal workers, some one million other foreigners are working here legally.

Human rights concerns

"It is a successful operation. No one was injured. We will conduct more raids," said Mohamad Amirudin Mohamad Yusof, director of the 300,000-strong civilian security force who led the raid.

The crackdown against illegal immigrants, mainly Indonesians, marked the end of an amnesty which had twice been extended at Jakarta's request.

Human rights groups had expressed concern about the massive crackdown, which they said was open to abuse.

"There is a high potential for human abuses to occur considering the magnitude of the operation," National Human Rights Society secretary general Elizabeth Wong said.

Amnesty International earlier this month urged Malaysia to halt the planned deportation of illegals amid fears some could face execution or torture in their home countries.

Amnesty International

Migrants from Burma (Myanmar), Nepal and Aceh could be subjected to serious human rights violations if they were sent home, it said.

One worker detained Tuesday, 35-year-old Amin, was nabbed after a futile bid to outrun his captors. He told a reporter that he was forced to skip the amnesty offer because "I have no money and there is no future for me in Indonesia."

Refugees with valid papers

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees said Malaysian authorities "mistakenly" arrested about 20 people, mostly from Aceh, even though they were refugees with valid documents issued by the agency.

The UNHCR has urged the government not to deport migrants from tsunami-struck areas of Aceh on compassionate grounds.

Malaysians blame rising urban crime on foreign workers, especially the illegal ones who are often dumped by their employers. *With reports from Jerome Aning, AFP, AP*

Village resident baffles House drugs probers

From page A1

shabu.

Rep. Roque Ablan Jr., committee chair, and Representatives Roilo Golez, Ace Barbers and Antonio Cuenco were puzzled by Gacutan's capacity to buy a house in the posh village.

Barbers noted that Gacutan used to work as a factory worker in Tondo, Manila, before his employment at Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. from 1986 to 1992.

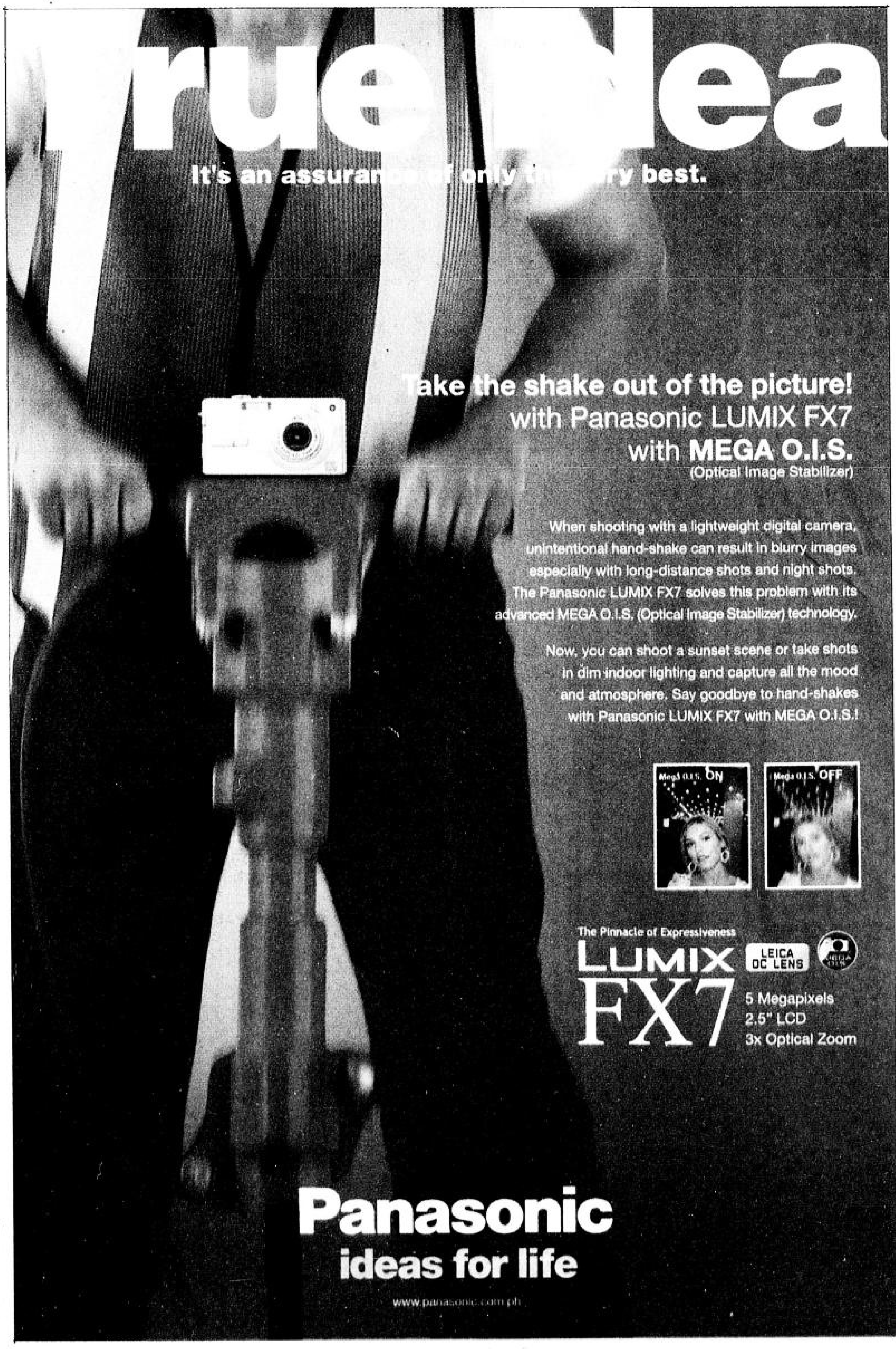
"It's questionable for the likes of Gacutan to [be able to] buy property in the subdivision with his meager monthly income of [P8,000 to P10,000]," said Barbers.

When congressmen demanded answers, Gacutan said he had been engaged in the construction business for about 10 years. When asked about his total assets, he invoked his right against self-incrimination.

Golez told reporters after the hearing that Gacutan had a "questionable character" and was most likely "hiding something" because he had chosen to hide behind the constitutional protection similarly invoked before congressional inquiries by Major Generals Carlos Garcia and Jacinto Ligot, both charged with corruption.

He noted that Gacutan even barred law enforcement agencies from taking custody of evidence seized during a raid on April 15, 2004.

Unable to extract sensible answers from Gacutan, Ablan ordered him to submit a copy of his individual tax return showing his real net worth. Gacutan agreed to bring it the following day.



When shooting with a lightweight digital camera, unintentional hand-shake can result in blurry images especially with long-distance shots and night shots. The Panasonic LUMIX FX7 solves this problem with its advanced MEGA O.I.S. (Optical Image Stabilizer) technology.

Now, you can shoot a sunset scene or take shots in dim indoor lighting and capture all the mood and atmosphere. Say goodbye to hand-shakes with Panasonic LUMIX FX7 with MEGA O.I.S.!

disenyo manila
Philippine International Furniture Show

28 February 03 March 2005
World Trade Center
Manila, Philippines

Trade Visitors:
Feb. 28 - Mar. 3, From 9:00 AM - 6:00 PM

General Public:
Mar. 2 - 3, From 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM
(Entrance Fee: Php. 150.00)

Show Rules:
- Business attire.
- Children below 12 are not allowed.
- No picture taking.
- Order taking only, no retail.

SEMINAR SERIES SCHEDULE

Philippine Trade Training Center,
Seminar Room C

Time	Program
March 1	
1:30pm - 3:00pm	Outlook and Merchandising Trends for the Middle East: Focus on the United Arab Emirates By: Ms. Maggie Moore, Editorin-in-Chief, Gulf Interiors
3:30pm - 5:00pm	Design and Merchandising Trends for Europe: Focus on Italy By: Ms. Vanessa Barcaccia, Import Manager, ICIB srl Mr. Italico Barcaccia, Owner, ICIB srl
March 2	
10:00am - 12:00nn	Design and Product Development: Overview and Trends By: Ms. Janet Guinto Ms. Rowe Requejo, Designers, PDDCP
2:00pm - 3:30pm	Culminating Seminar for the Design and Product Development Program of CFIP, PDDCP and PEARL2
March 3	
10:00am - 12:00nn	Communication Technology: Facilitating Business in the 21st By: Mr. Paul Chong, International Sales Manager, NET2PHONE-Asia Pacific Mr. Jonas Santiago and Mr. Arnold Despi, Managing Partners, RADJTech Ms. Amelia Cabansay, President, Virtual Route Philippines
2:00pm - 4:30pm	Abrasives and Finishing Technologies: Furniture and Woodworking Solutions By: Mr. Gerald Trinidad, Sr. Sales Representative, 3M Phil Mr. Don Pascual, Technical Manager, Syntema Manila, Inc.

For seminar details, fees and discounts, contact the Show Secretariat at Tel. no.: 551-5226

Organized by:
Chamber of Furniture Industries of the Philippines
9/F Unit H, Strata 100 Bldg., Emerald Ave., Ortigas, 1600 Pasig City
Tel nos: (+63 2) 6312834 - 6329007 * Fax no. (+63 2) 6312977
E-mail: info@cfipnet.com * URL: www.cfip.com.ph

KIDNAP CASE VS ROLDAN

Wang can't be state witness—PNP

KIDNAP suspect Suzette Wang cannot be a state witness against purported boyfriend Dennis Roldan, the ex-congressman who is a primary suspect in the kidnapping of a three-year-old boy in Pasig City last month, according to police director Robert Delfin.

Wang is considered one of the masterminds and therefore not among the "least guilty," said Delfin, the head of the Police Anti-Crime Emergency Response (Pacer).

"She helped plot it (the kidnapping)," he added.

Wang was a close friend of the Yus, the parents of the child who was snatched on his way to school last month. Police rescued the boy from an apartment in Quezon City 11 days after he was abducted.

Roldan and six other persons have been arrested in connection with the kidnapping.

Last week, Wang tried to commit suicide by attempting to jump off a condominium and slashing her left wrist. She has been discharged from the hospital but has not been formally charged.

The case is now under preliminary investigation. The police are waiting for Wang to submit her counter-affidavit.

As for two other suspects being eyed as possible witnesses against Roldan, Delfin said the justice department would have to evaluate their case.

Philippine National Police spokesperson Sr. Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil said the testimonies of the two suspects—Albert Pagdanganan and Octavio Garces—"definitely strengthened our case."

Pagdanganan pointed to Roldan, Garces and "a woman named Suzette" as the masterminds of the kidnapping.

Roldan's lawyer, Salvador Panelo, maintained that his client was innocent and a victim of a frame-up.

He said he would be filing two petitions for *habeas corpus* on behalf of Roldan.

The lawyer of Wang meanwhile said the testimony of Pagdanganan implicating his client and a video allegedly showing her involvement in the abduction were not enough to prove Wang's guilt.

He said Pagdanganan's claim should be reviewed carefully since it comes from a suspect who wanted to clear his name from accusations that he was also involved in the kidnapping.

The video reportedly showed Wang and Roldan visiting the safe house where the kidnapped boy was held.

De Ungria said that unless the video showed Wang interrogating the boy, it would not necessarily prove that she knew anything about the kidnapping.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez yesterday admitted that his wife was a "distant relative" of Roldan.

But he said this would not stop him from pursuing the case against Roldan, Wang and the six others accused in the case.

The Bureau of Immigration said Roldan and Wang had been ordered placed them on its watch list based on a Feb. 24 order.

Immigration commissioner Alipio Fernandez said he issued the order preventing Roldan (Mitchell Yap Gumabao in real life) and Wang from leaving the Philippines without a clearance from authorities.

The BI usually puts criminal suspects on a watch list pending the issuance of a hold departure order, which originates from the Department of Justice or the courts.

Records of the House of Representatives meanwhile indicated that Roldan, who was then a representative of the third district of Quezon City, did not take part in the final vote for House Bill 62, which became the law that prescribes the death penalty for heinous crimes, including kidnapping.

The Feb. 23, 1993 journal on the voting showed Roldan arriving on this day minutes after the roll call. When the bill was put to a vote, he left the session hall. His name was called twice during the voting, but he failed to register or explain his vote, the journal showed.

Roldan served as a congressman from July 1993 to June 1995 during the administration of President Fidel Ramos. He was a member of the ruling Lakas.

Roldan authored 18 resolutions and bills, mostly concerning his district, none of which was adopted. *Reports from Luige del Puerto, Philip C. Tubeza, Armand N. Nocum, Leila B. Salaverria and Cynthia D. Balana*

UNBEATABLE OFFERS! UNPARALLELED DEALS!

Anson EMPORIUM

APPLIANCE INSTALLMENT SHOWDOWN

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

'People power' topples Lebanese gov't

AFP

AP

THOUSANDS of protesters (left) wave Lebanese flags in central Beirut Monday during a rally against Lebanon's pro-Syrian government two weeks after the assassination of former premier Rafiq Hariri. Above, a protestor offers roses to Lebanese security forces.

BEIRUT—The Lebanese capital exploded in rapturous cheers on Monday as tens of thousands of demonstrators hailed the "people power" that led to the downfall of the government in the face of unprecedented public protests.

Lebanon's pro-Syrian Prime Minister Omar Karameh resigned on Monday in the face of mass protests, bringing to a head a political crisis sparked by the murder two weeks ago of his predecessor Rafiq Hariri.

"I announce the resignation of the government over which I had the honor of presiding so that it does not pose an obstacle" to the probe into the killing, an emotional Karameh told parliament in a decision that plunges the country into new political turmoil.

The announcement was greeted with loud applause in the national assembly, where the opposition had been seeking a vote of no confidence in Karameh's four-month-old government.

In scenes reminiscent of the "orange revolution" in Ukraine, Beirut was a sea of red and white Lebanese flags as Karameh announced his resignation.

"For the first time, Lebanese public opinion has won," said Ghinwa Jallul, an MP with Hariri's political bloc.

Demonstrators who have been staging almost daily protests against the regime and its Syrian backers since Hariri's killing burst into boisterous applause as they watched Karameh's announcement on a giant television screen.

Fireworks and car horns greeted the news around the capital and in other towns as people hugged each other, chanting triumphantly "he's resigned, he's resigned."

Tens of thousands of jubilant demonstrators, gathered in a sea of red and white Lebanese flags at the nearby Martyrs' Square in central Beirut, broke into singing the national anthem.

"Karameh has fallen, your turn will come, Lahoud, and yours, Bashar," the demonstrators chanted, referring to President Emile Lahoud and his Syrian counterpart Bashar al-Assad.

The crowd, estimated to number some 60,000, had defied a government ban on demonstrations and massed in the heart of Beirut as parliament held the debate on Hariri's murder in a huge Feb. 14 bomb blast.

But in stark contrast to the scenes of joy in the capital and other cities, the mood was one of anger in Karameh's home town of Tripoli. His supporters launched volleys of machine-gun fire into the air, blocked traffic with burning tires and tore down opposition banners.

"With our blood, with our soul, we will defend you o Karameh," they shouted, along with slogans insulting leading opposition figure, the Druze MP Walid Jumblatt and voicing their backing for Syria.

Making his announcement, Karameh said he was resigning even though the government had enough votes to win a confidence motion.

"To fire off political accusations pinning the responsibility of this criminal murder on the government without any proof is a grave injustice," he said in an earlier session of the house before a recess.

Karameh's Cabinet took office after Hariri, a five-time prime minister and billionaire businessman, resigned in October in a row over Syrian influence in his country.

The resignation came exactly two weeks after the assassination which triggered a wave of public opposition against the Lebanese government and its backers in Damascus who are widely blamed for the murder.

Shouting "Syria out!" protesters descended on Martyrs' Square where Hariri is buried as hundreds of heavily armed troops and police guarded nearby streets but did not prevent the rally.

Many spent Sunday night at the square despite the ban on protests coming into force. And shops, banks, schools and businesses were closed in Beirut and other main cities following a call for a general strike. *AFP*

A VIDEO image shows an Iraqi pushing an injured man on a market trolley Feb. 28 following a suicide car bomb attack on a crowd of people in the town of Hilla, south of Baghdad, which killed 125 people and wounded 130, the single deadliest attack since the fall of Saddam Hussein in April 2003. REUTERS

Bin Laden enlists top Iraq operative for US attacks

WASHINGTON—Osama bin Laden is enlisting his top operative in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, to plan potential attacks on the United States, US intelligence indicates.

Al-Zarqawi, who rivals Bin Laden as the nation's public enemy No. 1, has been involved in attacks in the Middle East but has not been known before to have set his sights on the US.

The Homeland Security Department issued a classified bulletin to officials over the weekend about the intelligence, which spokesman Brian Roehrkasse described Monday as "credible but not specific."

The intelligence was obtained over the past several weeks, officials said.

The US has no immediate plans to raise its national terror alert level, Roehrkasse said. However, the intelligence "reiterates the desire by al-Qaida and its associates to target the homeland," he said.

Bin Laden was in contact with al-Zarqawi within the past two months in an effort to enlist him in attacks, a US official said on condition of anonymity. The move may reflect the al-Qaida leadership's desire to involve al-Zarqawi in activities outside Iraq, the official said.

Events in Iraq, officials noted, have limited al-Zarqawi's ability to undertake attacks elsewhere.

Al-Zarqawi is blamed for scores of attacks in Iraq and pledged allegiance to Bin Laden and the al-Qaida network last year. Yet he has had differences with Bin Laden, and his efforts are considered somewhat distinct from central al-Qaida operations.

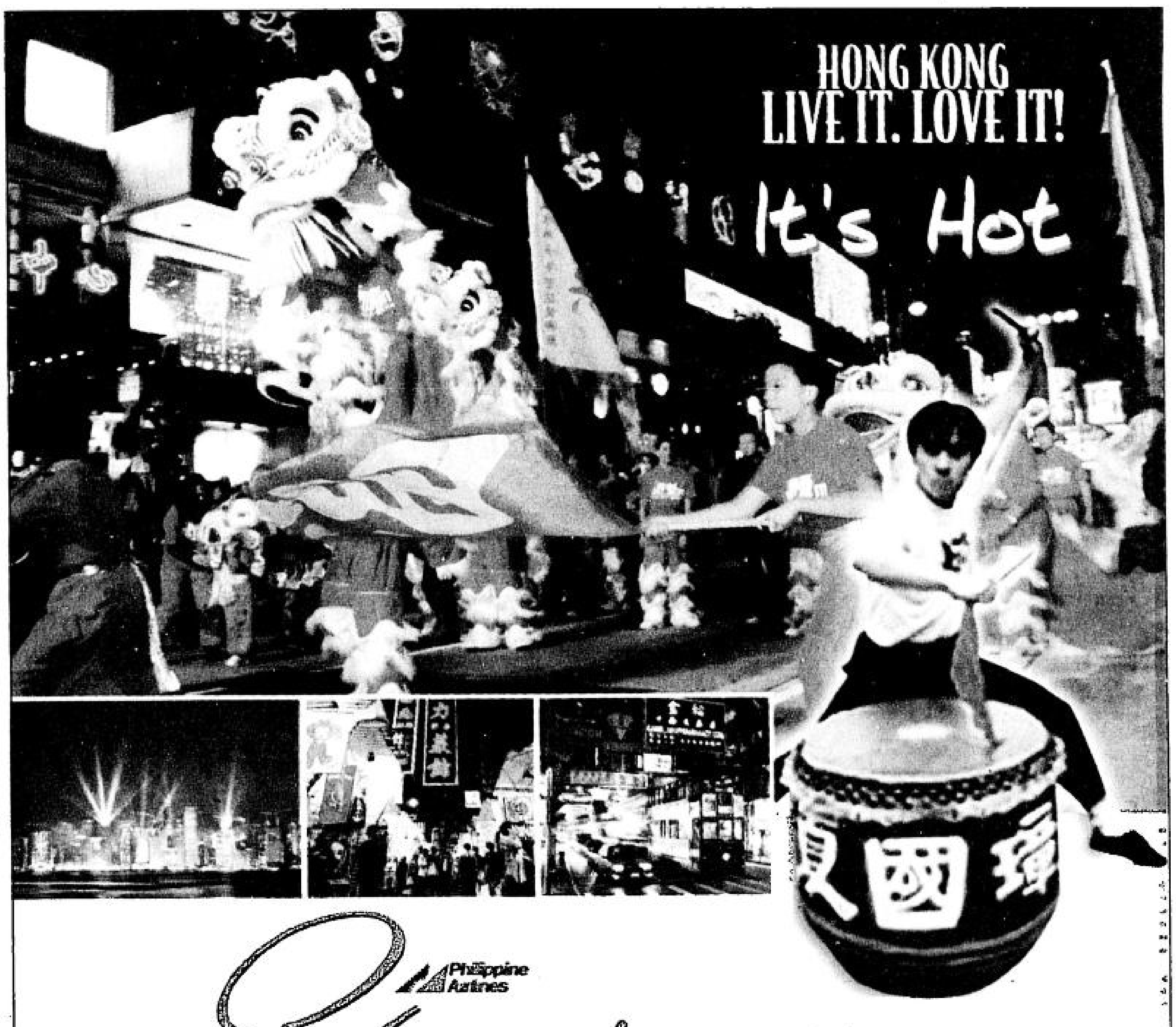
Another administration official with access to the Homeland Security Department's bulletin said the intelligence indicates that al-Qaida has continued to encourage al-Zarqawi, who was born in Jordan, to get involved in terrorist actions against Americans outside of Iraq—including in the US.

"The intelligence continues to be analyzed by the intelligence community and all appropriate information will be passed on to homeland security partners," Roehrkasse said. "The department has no plans at this time to raise the threat level based on this nonspecific information."

DHS sent the bulletin to state homeland security directors. A justice department official said the FBI was not involved, and that the information that led to the bulletin was gleaned by CIA intelligence.

Al-Zarqawi has a $25 million US bounty on his head and is believed to have orchestrated a wave of car bombings, kidnappings, assassinations and beheadings across Iraq. He has run an increasingly dangerous, but diffuse, network of operatives in Iraq known by a number of names. Al-Zarqawi is blamed largely for attacks in the Middle East, including numerous attacks in Iraq and foiled plots targeting US and Israeli targets in Jordan at the millennium.

In October, he made a first-ever pledge of loyalty to Bin Laden, by posting a message on a website known for carrying militant Islamic content. At the time, US officials believed al-Zarqawi was hoping to appeal to a larger audience and adopt Bin Laden's broad objective to attack the US. *AP*



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Israel insists Syria to blame for Tel Aviv attack

JERUSALEM—Israel insisted Monday that Syria was to blame for a Tel Aviv suicide attack as a car packed with explosives was discovered in the West Bank, casting a shadow over efforts to forge peace in the Middle East.

Stepping up the war of words against arch-foe Syria, Israeli intelligence briefed EU ambassadors on its alleged involvement in Friday's bombing, claimed by militant group Islamic Jihad.

"We see Syria as responsible by allowing those extremists to have their headquarters there, their training camps there and to give them all the assistance that they're asking," Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom said.

Syria, already under immense international pressure to withdraw its troops from Lebanon, has denied any connection with the nightclub bombing and insists Islamic Jihad's office in Damascus has closed.

Just three days after the Tel Aviv attack, Israeli troops discovered a car packed with explosives in the northern West Bank, casting yet another shadow over steps toward peace after more than four years of violence.

The military said the vehicle, found outside the village of Arrabeh—not far from the radical stronghold of Jenin—had been rigged by Islamic Jihad.

"The car was ready for use in an attack and it was apparently prepared by the group which carried out the suicide bomb in Tel Aviv," said a spokesperson.

The European Commission promptly called on Palestinians and Israelis to prevent a new derailment of the peace process, as Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas said it would be reckless to let a chance for peace fade.

"President Abbas must take effective steps to fight and dismantle the terror organizations, stop incitement, and maintain law and order," said EU external relations chief Benita Ferrero-Waldner.

"(Israeli) Prime Minister (Ariel) Sharon needs to ease restrictions on freedom of movement. Both sides are taking risks for peace and need our support."

As the death toll from the Tel Aviv blast rose to five, the overall number of people killed since the September 2000 outbreak of the Palestinian uprising reached 4,742, including 3,682 Palestinians and 986 Israelis.

On the eve of a London conference on Palestinian reform, Abbas insisted the Palestinians were "exerting 100 percent effort" to end anti-Israeli violence.

"We have an opportunity and it would be irresponsible if we, the Israelis, or the world allow it to slip away," he was quoted as telling Britain's Independent newspaper.

Israel has warned there would be no progress in the peace process until the Palestinians crack down on militants, threatening to halt the planned release of 400 prisoners in the aftermath of the bombing. *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Death toll in car blast hits 125

HILLA, Iraq—A suicide bomber killed 125 people and wounded 130 by detonating a car near police recruits in a crowded market south of Baghdad on Monday, the single bloodiest attack in Iraq since the fall of Saddam Hussein. The bomber blew the car up next to a line of recruits waiting at a health center to take an eye test so they could join the Iraqi police in the town of Hilla, 100 km south of the capital, witnesses said. Many of those killed were at the market across the road, and were caught in the blast as they shopped in morning sunshine. Reuters television footage showed a pile of bloodied bodies outside the building. Smoke rose from the wreckage of burnt-out market stalls as bystanders loaded mangled corpses on to rickety wooden carts, usually used to carry fruit and vegetables. Others, their limbs ripped to shreds, were piled into the back of pickup trucks. Nearby buildings were pockmarked by shrapnel. *Reuters*

Trials of Saddam officials set

BAGHDAD—Saddam Hussein's half-brother Barzan Ibrahim Hassan al-Tikriti, his former vice president Taha Yasin Ramadan and three others will be the first members of the old regime to go on trial for crimes against humanity, an Iraqi special tribunal said Monday. The five men, handcuffed and escorted by police, were hauled one by one before the court's chief investigative judge, who told them they would be tried for the 1982 killing of 143 residents of Dujail, a village northeast of Baghdad. They are accused of carrying out revenge murders after Dujail villagers allegedly tried to assassinate Saddam. The case, which can begin now that the court's formal investigation into the alleged crimes has been wrapped up, will not start for at least 45 days. *AFP*

US rebukes China's human rights record

WASHINGTON—The United States, in its annual human rights report released Monday, accused China of muting dissent, suppressing religious rights and restricting freedom of speech. "The Government continued to commit numerous and serious abuses," said the 2004 report, which also said Beijing's cooperation and progress on human rights last year was "disappointing." The report said there were cases of extrajudicial killings, torture and mistreatment of prisoners. "The lack of due process was particularly egregious in death penalty cases, and the accused was often denied a meaningful appeal," it said *AFP*

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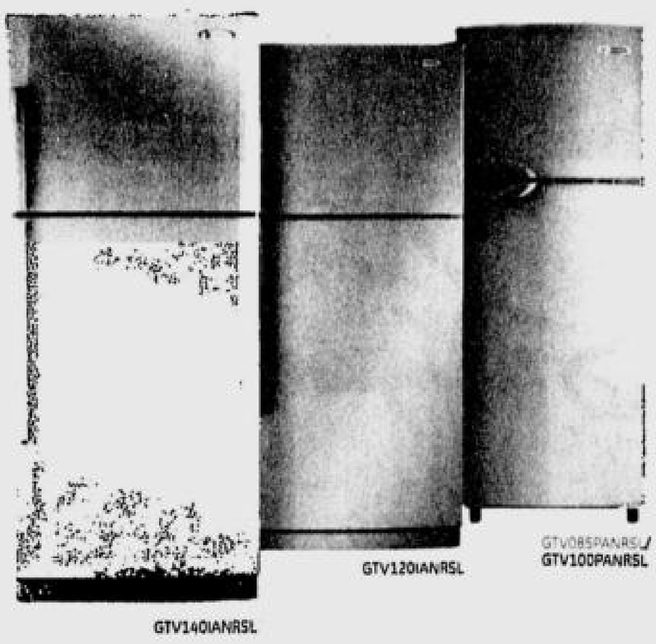

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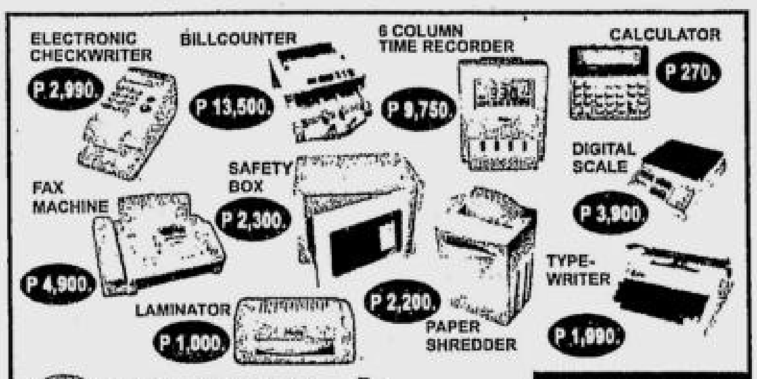

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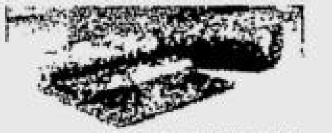

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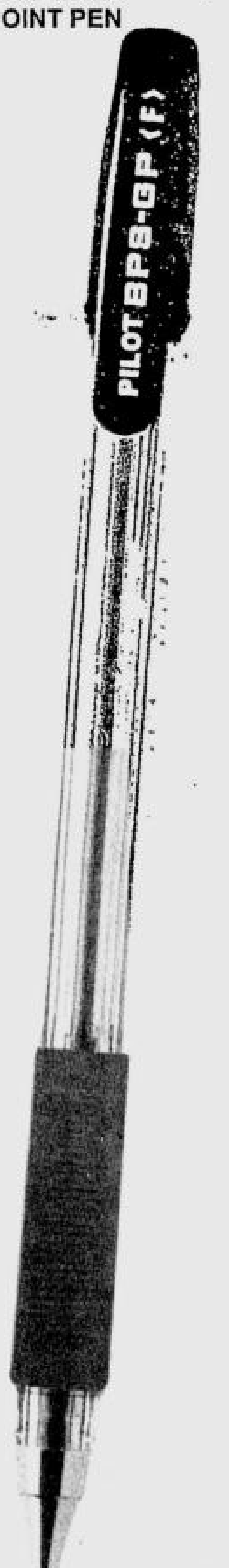

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MESSAGES

Office of the President
Republic of the Philippines
Malacañang Palace

I convey my most cordial greetings to the religious leaders and the entire congregation of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church as you celebrate its 100th Year in the country.

Despite overwhelming odds, our country is now moving forward. This we owe to the dynamic resolve of all sectors of society to participate in nation building. Your Church, along with other religious groups, has contributed much to our social and moral transformation. I laud your commitment to spreading the gospel of Christ while helping promote peace and harmony within our society.

This historic milestone should reaffirm your faith and inspire you to continue working for God's cause. By providing a venue for spiritual maturity and religious interactions, and offering solace and enlightenment to lost souls, your Church has shown itself as a caring and compassionate institution.

I urge you to support government efforts to reach out to our people and heal the deep divisions within our society. Together, we shall beat the odds and improve the lives of all Filipinos.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

Gloria Arroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President

Office of the Senate President
Republic of the Philippines
Philippine Senate

I am greatly honored to celebrate with the members of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in their Centennial anniversary in the Philippines.

On this glorious occasion, we express our thanks and gratitude to God Almighty for all the blessings He has granted us all through the fruitful years of existence of believers.

On behalf of my fellow Senators, my family and staff, I would like to commend the members and leaders of the Church who worked hard to make the Centennial celebration a reality.

Congratulations and *Mabuhay Kayong Lahat!*

FRANKLIN M. DRILON
Senate President

Office of the House Speaker
Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives

My warmest congratulations to the Seventh-Day Adventist Church on the celebration of your centennial anniversary this March 2005.

The noble calling to spread the gospel in the Philippines has burned with zeal among your church leaders and members for a hundred years. Your contributions towards building progressive and peaceful communities are beyond measure.

On this historic juncture, I call on the Seventh-Day Adventist Church to join our advocacy to build peace among nations, peoples and civilizations through the inter-faith dialogue at the global and regional levels.

I am hopeful that inter-faith dialogue which the United National General assembly formally adopted in November last year, will serve as the basis for a global multi-religious and multi-cultural peace-building mechanism and end centuries of violence caused by racial and religious misunderstandings.

Let us offer the best of our abilities to God and fellowmen in grateful celebration of God's mercy and love.

JOSE DE VENECIA, JR.
Speaker of the House of Representatives

SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST
CHURCH

Mission

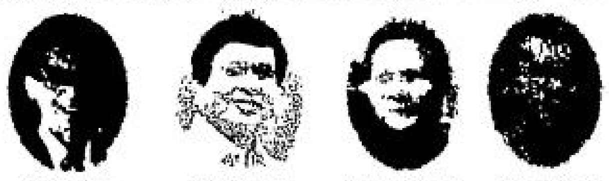
The Seventh-day Adventist Churc
proclaims to all peoples the everlast
gospel leading them to accept Jesus
their personal Savior and to unite w
His church, and nurturing them i
preparation for Jesus' soon retur

Vision

We see as the climax of God's plan
restoration of all His creation to fi
harmony with His perfect will.

RA Caldwell LV Finster L Roda B Panis E Manalaysay

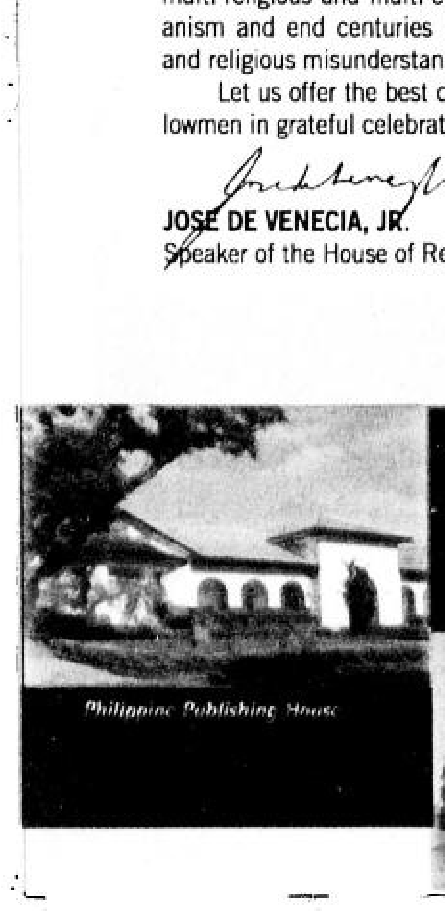
In *1905*, Robert A. Caldwell, from Australia, traveled to the Philippines and started selling health and religious books. The Filipinos reached with eager hands to receive the advent message through the printed page. This was the first ink mark of a tremendous story that is still being written in the lives of the Adventist Filipinos, and the beginning of Adventism in the country. ❁ A year after, JL McElhany and wife were sent by Australasian Union Conference to help in preparing publications for the large number of Americans scattered throughout the islands and the nationals of the country as well. ❁ In 1908, LV Finster came and took charge of the work in the islands. He devoted his time preparing books and translating them into local dialects. He gave Bible studies in Santa Ana, Manila. This effort resulted to the organization of the first church of 18 members in Sta. Ana in March 1911. ❁ LV Finster trained young men as evangelists in different parts of the metropolis. Before the end of the year these men were sent out, and their early successes form one of the stirring chapters in the Adventists' history in the Philippines. The first three Filipino ministers ordained in 1919 were Bibiano Panis, Leon Roda, and Emilio Manalaysay. ❁ The church work all over the Philippines grew fast as foreign missionaries were added to help with the work. Finster held the helm of administration and leadership by example in Manila. RE Hay and his family were assigned to work with the Ilocanos in northern Luzon where they pioneered until 1921. Dr. Carlos Fattebert and wife were assigned to the Cebuan field where Robert Stewart joined them as a literature evangelist. And EM Adams, with Fausto Jornada, followed up interests created by a young literature evangelist, Floyd Ashbaugh, in Panay, Guimaras and other southern islands...



AC Gulfan ND Dayson JM Toledanes RA Tabingo

Today, the world regional headquarters of the church, Southern Asia Pacific Division is in Silang, Cavite. It is the highest office that directs the church programs of 18 Asian countries. ❁ Facing the challenge of the new millennium, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Philippines has three major unions: North Philippine Union Mission covering the whole territory of Luzon, Central Philippine Union Conference overseeing the Visayas group of islands, and South Philippine Union Conference supervising the area of Mindanao. The Church has reached its mark of 1, 012,144 Filipino baptized members on its centennial year, *2005*.

Adventist University of the Philippines



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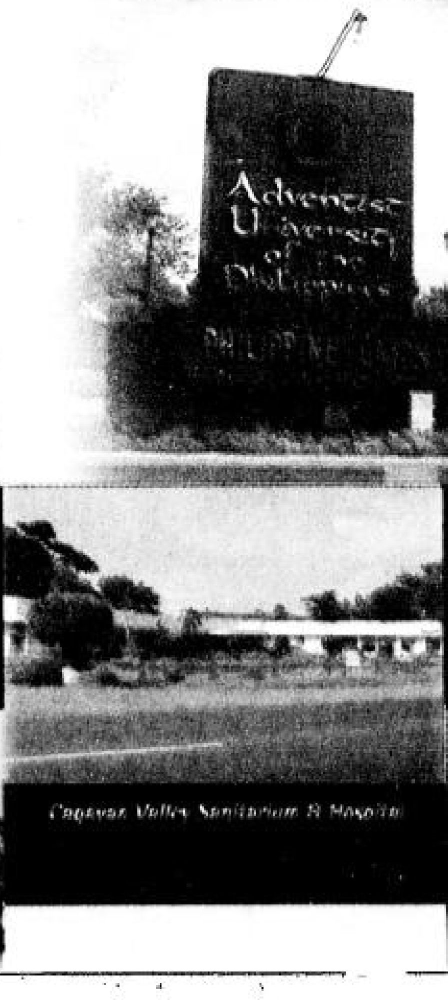
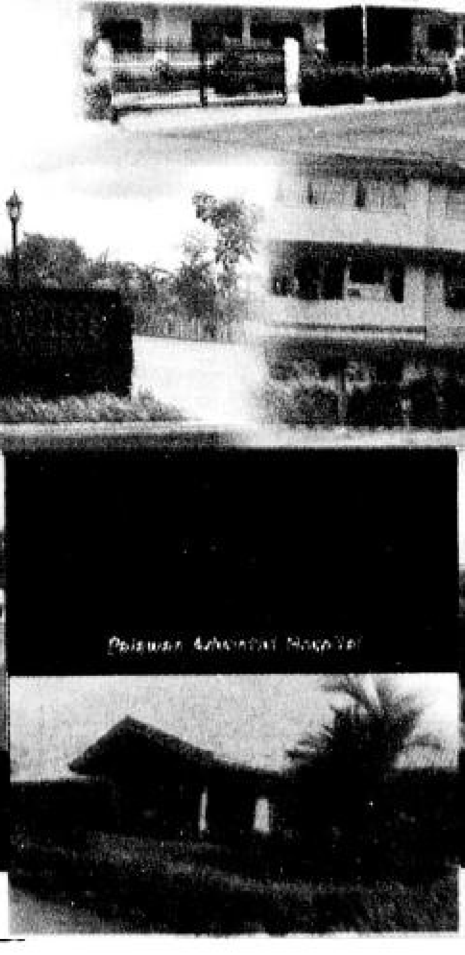


Cagayan Valley Sanitarium & Hospital



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od's Goodness

100 Years in the Philippines

STATEMENT OF FAITH

AWAIT the soon return of our Redeemer, who will restore the eternal fellowship of man with God.

BELIEVE in Christ, our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary, whose death on Calvary assures us of salvation.

CELEBRATE our salvation made possible by the grace of our Lord.

EXPERIENCE a close relationship with our Lord by living in a way He is honored.

KNOW the Bible precepts and prophecies and Christ's victory on Calvary.

LOVE the Lord by obeying the Ten Commandments, transcript of God's character, the standard of His judgment and the moral basis of human relationship.

RECOGNIZE the controversy between our heavenly Father and Satan that has shaped all of earth's history.

SENSE our need for Christ in the midst of this great conflict between good and evil.

SHARE the message of our Savior Jesus Christ's redeeming grace, fulfilling the biblical command: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel..."

UPHOLD the Bible as the only standard of Christian faith and practice.

WORSHIP God on His Sabbath day as a memorial of the Lord's creative and redemptive power.

HOW TO STOP SMOKING
RELIEF OPERATIONS
ADVENTISTS
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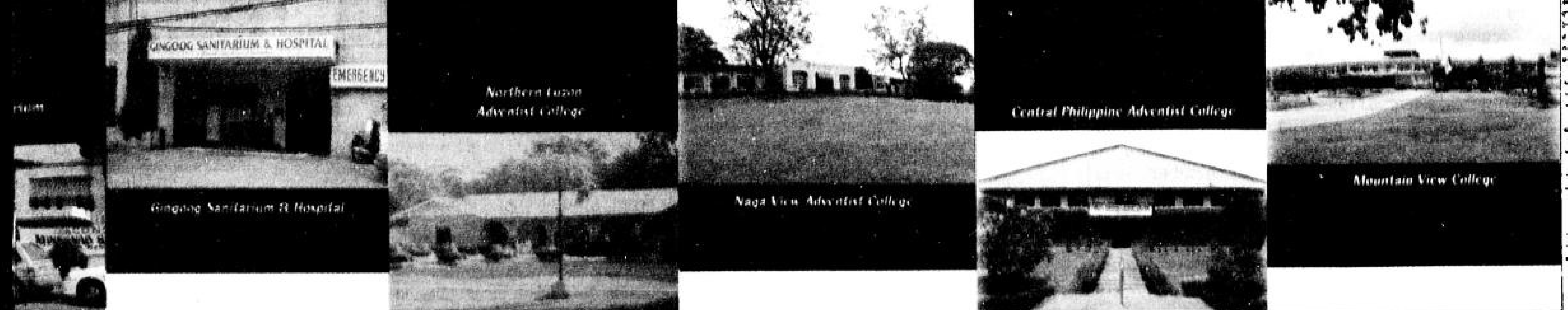
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OPINION

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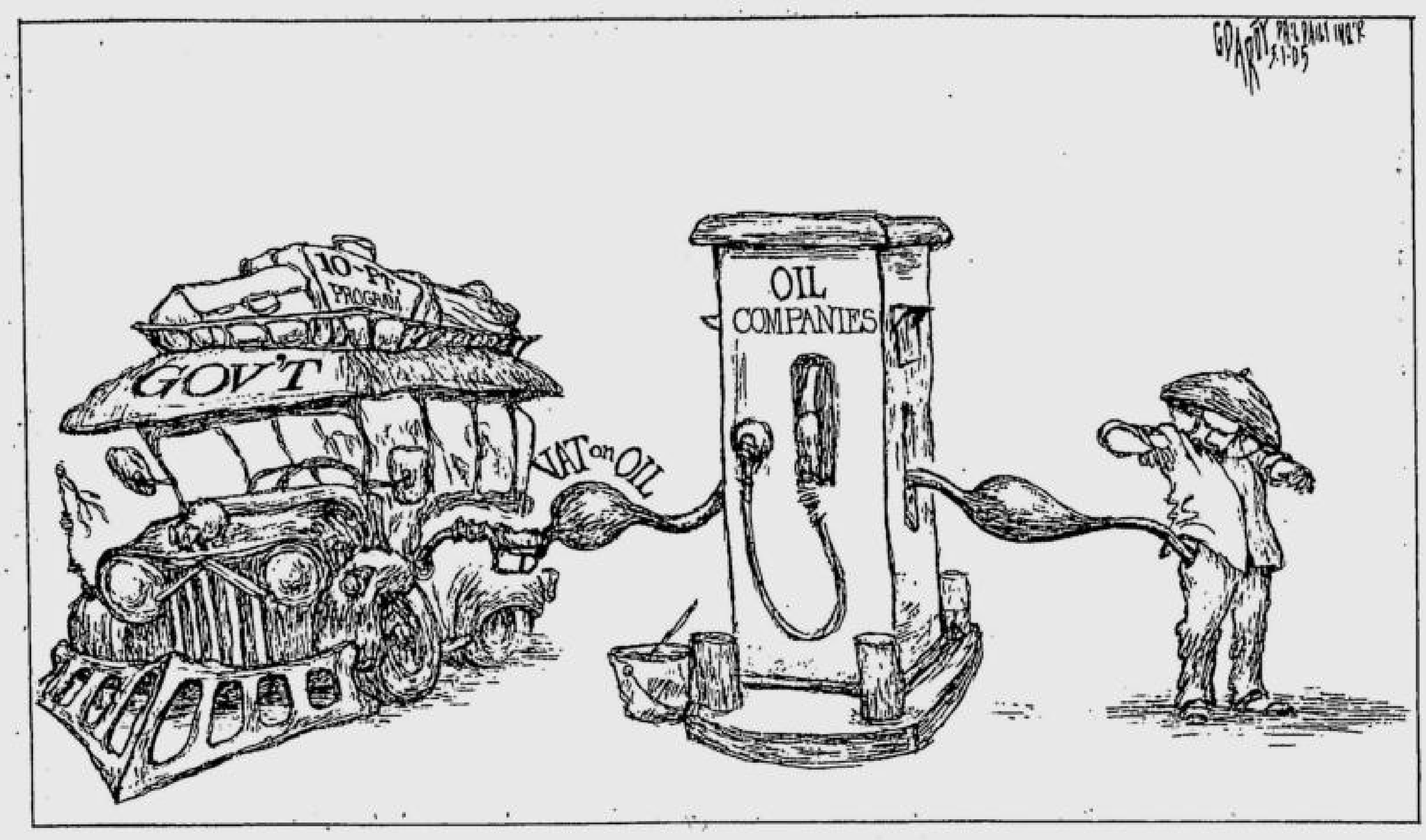


A world of their own

EDITORIAL

PERHAPS because she used to be a senator, President Macapagal Arroyo has always approached legislative liaison work with a light touch. On more than one occasion, she has downplayed the administration's difficulties in mustering the necessary votes in the houses of Congress, especially in the Senate, by pointing to the bottom line: At the end of the proverbial day, she gets the bills she needs passed anyway.

Now she is not as blithe. On Monday, she used the occasion of a sparsely attended lunch she hosted in Malacañang marking the centenary of the Rotary Club of Manila to rebuke both Houses of Congress. Their offense: a continuing failure to pass the national budget.

The last time Congress passed a national budget, the President noted, was in 2003. But reenactment in 2005 is no longer an option. Another reenacted budget would only court disaster, principally because of the successive downgrades by international credit-rating agencies in the last two years. Reenactment, which automatically takes place when the proposed budget does not meet legislative deadlines, would mean operating this year's programs with two-year-old assumptions: the surest sign that the government is running as fast as it can merely to stay in place.

The President said, pointedly, that she was "fighting for this budget to be passed this March because it will send a signal to our people and to investors that we're in control of our own future."

Congress, in implied contrast, was sending the wrong signal. "Those who oppose the national budget and the VAT [the proposed 20-percent increase in the value-added tax] will set this nation back and put us on a collision course with fiscal and economic responsibility," she said, drawing a graphic picture in black and white. "They will hold this nation hostage to a future devoid of hope by putting petty politics ahead of the national good."

Hyperbole informs much of political rhetoric, and the President's second statement makes generous use of this characteristic figure of speech. Petty politics? A future devoid of hope? We detect a hint of panic creeping into the President's language. But this much at least is true: the Houses of Congress, especially the Senate, have been unmoved by urgency.

The two chambers have dutifully laid the blame for the delay at each other's doorsteps. But a revealing speech by opposition maverick Sen. Panfilo Lacson last Monday reinforces our conviction that the Senate bears more of the blame.

Speaking before the Makati Business Club, Lacson disclosed that senators had "succeeded in removing P1.3 billion in intelligence funds from the executive branch . . . [only to] channel the slashed funds to their pork barrel allocations."

There is no direct correlation between this legislative sleight of hand and the delay in the budget, but just the same it tells us all we need to know.

We have joined other advocates who have called for the scrapping of the pork barrel. We believe this is one of the most efficient ways to cut down on the national budget. Defenders have argued that, at about P20 billion, the pork barrel funds do not amount to much. They are wrong, of course; every single peso counts. They are also obtuse: If legislators give up their pork barrel allocations, the message of self-sacrifice gains power, becomes compelling.

Various senators have rejected the appeal to scrap the pork barrel for various reasons, but if we were to venture a summary of their arguments, we would say what is common is precisely the lack of a sense of self-sacrifice.

The tone of budget deliberations in the Senate was set by the famously acerbic Sen. Joker Arroyo, who asked his fellow senators to pretend that agencies like Moody's Investor Service do not exist. We can sympathize with Arroyo, who is visibly nettled at the prospect of following (or worse, being seen to follow) the conditions of an international agency. But to pretend that independent risk evaluators do not exist, because they encroach on the privileges of the gentlemen of the upper chamber? Senators must be living in a world of their own.

Lacson's disclosure gives us additional proof that this is so. In spite of all the talk about the urgent need to trim the budget and get the economy going, our honorable senators have been caught playing games, of the pork barrel kind.

Logging ban will make building houses cheaper

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

(Continued from Monday)

WHAT my column last Monday was driving at is that the Philippines and all the Filipinos (not only the loggers) will earn more from our forests, if we preserve them for people to enjoy instead of cutting them as we are doing now. So the argument that jobs, export income and taxes from the wood industry would be lost with a logging ban does not hold water.

Workers who lose their jobs killing trees would get better-paying and more honorable jobs in tourism and the government would get more in foreign exchange and in taxes. And the forests would remain there for decades and decades, continuing to earn money long after the loggers would have run away with their loot and the mountains have become bald and eroded had these forests been mowed down. This is not conjecture. Other countries—Africa, the United States, Canada, Japan, for example—are earning more from their forests and wild animals that they saved than they ever could have earned had they cut and killed them.

The wood producers say local prices of wood would rise because we would have to import our wood requirements. I think that is one reason our forests are being denuded fast: wood is so cheap here that we are wasteful in its use, particularly the construction industry. Form lumber used in scaffolding for just one residential house is enough to lay waste one small forest. Other countries that value their wood use instead recyclable steel for scaffolding. Big Filipino contractors are just beginning to do that now; others still waste so much wood.

Local furniture makers still use the tropical hardwood narra for cheap furniture because we can still harvest narra from our forests. Other countries that have to import tropical hardwoods value them very much and use them only for very expensive furniture and accents.

Japan, which has extensive bamboo and pine forests, import wood even for their chopsticks. They only look at and enjoy their bamboo and pine forests instead of cutting them, in the process earning much more from domestic and foreign tourists than what they spend importing wood.

Expensive wood and scarce supplies would make tree farming more profitable and attractive. Those denuded areas would become tree farms. Tree farming for wood is a profitable industry in Canada and the United States, which export their wood and paper products.

Even so, the world's construction industry is using less and less wood and using more and more concrete, steel and petrochemical substitutes. In the New England states in the US East Coast, cottages in the quaint villages still look like they are made of wood but they are not. The clapboard walls look like planks of wood, complete with wood grains and whorls but they are made of plastic, nylon and other petrochemical substitutes. Floors and room walls may look like marble, brick, granite, tile, stucco and again wood, but they are really made of hard plastic. Bathroom units, complete with bathtubs, toilet, sink, etc. are molded in one piece, also of the same materials, thanks to the US petrochemcial industry, which uses the byproducts of oil refineries.

These materials have many advantages over wood. They are light, cheap, don't rot, are impervious to termites and fungi, come in different colors so you don't have to paint them. They make the cost of a house very inexpensive. Needless to say, they would be very useful in the Philippines where the cost of even a modest house is beyond the reach of many families. Also, they are the answer to termites, fungi and dry rot that make short work of wooden houses here. We planned to put up a petrochemical plant in Bataan to use the byproducts of the oil refineries but weren't sure what products to make. Well, those petrochem construction materials I mentioned, if produced here, would revolutionize our construction industry.

Wood producers also say that legal loggers practice a "sustainable forest program" and reforest their concessions, that without them illegal loggers would decimate the remaining forests, and that a logging ban does not guarantee that all logging would stop.

"Sustainable development" is a mantra that loggers have been repeating for decades. But the forests keep disappearing and the mountains keep getting bald. Where is the sustainable forestry program there? Where are the reforested areas?

The trouble with having timber concessions is that some concessionaires poach on forests outside their concessions and then claim that logs cut from there came from their concessions. It is difficult to distinguish between legal and illegal logs. But with a total logging ban, all cut logs would be illegal, all sawmills would have to be closed because there would be no logs to saw, and therefore anybody who has logs or lumber without any import papers can be arrested. Where else would he get the timber?

That should stop all logging and perhaps the remaining forests don't even have to be guarded. Because the certainty that anybody possessing timber would be caught and imprisoned and no excuse can save him will prevent people from cutting forest trees.

Finally, the wood producers claim that "logging was not responsible for the floods and landslides in Aurora and Quezon." What a transparent lie. Where did all those cut logs littering the foot of the mountains, the rivers and the seas come from? Did lightning, perchance, strike all those trees so cleanly that they looked like they were cut with chainsaws?

Trojan horse

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THERE are five—yes, five—bills pending in Congress attempting to stop what, to go by their sheer preponderance, they reckon to be a scourge of the land. Which is pornography. The bills range from the almost apologetic to the openly apoplectic. One is positively apocalyptic, invoking the wrath of God to fall on those human creations that do not extol His glory.

These bills are: HB 445, "prohibiting the publication of lewd photographs and sex stories and articles in tabloid and broadsheets," by M.E. Zamora; HB 2838, creating a "local print media monitoring board in all municipalities and cities to prevent the proliferation of obscene publications," by Dodot Jaworski; HB 1278 "prohibiting the publication, sale or distribution, production, importation, and exhibition of obscene and pornographic materials and the demonstration, performance or exhibition in public of indecent and sexual acts" by Emmanuel Villanueva, son of the preacher man, and would-be president, Eddie V.; HB 2031, same as the last, by Eileen Buhain and Alan Peter Cayetano; and HB 2887, still same as the last, by Bienvenido Abante Jr.

The bills variously try to pin down what constitutes "lewd" or "pornographic" to a level of detail that almost makes you think their authors spent a great deal of time dwelling on it or are engaged in some kind of vicarious self-flagellation, projecting their fantasies and prescribing punishments for them. I can almost picture their research assistants watching strip shows intently in dark joints and telling grinning acquaintances who espy them in scornful tones, "In aid of legislation, *pare*."

But this is the sort of seemingly trivial thing that has not very trivial consequences. You can't afford to dismiss it blithely. I can appreciate how some parents might feel at having the frail sensibilities of their children assaulted by ads in newspapers, TV and billboards that show women (and men) in a state that little improves on the one they got launched into the world in. Though while at this, surely the frail sensibilities of those children stand to be more ravaged by ads that ask them to change the color of their skin through skin whiteners? Yet no congressman has thought to protest this. But these bills do not make things better, as decency goes, they make things worse. This is one cure that is patently worse than the affliction.

At the very least, it poses a danger not to pornography but to art. One would think our experience with the old MTRCB, which banned "Belle Epoque" and X-ed "Schindler's List" would have taught us a lesson in caution. Indeed, one would have thought our experience with "Live Show," a perfectly reputable work about a disreputable subject, would have taught us a lesson in manners. Pornography is not an easy animal to identify. I had thought several court rulings in the past had settled the issue, which is that naked bodies, particularly as locked in the exchange of body fluids, the thing that particularly stokes the wrath of the authors of these bills, should be interpreted in context.

The five bills themselves, vying with one another to ferret out evil and cast it into eternal fire, are a surefire guarantee of a plunge to an artistic Stone Age, where only "The Sound of Music" can be shown. Maybe not even that, as some idiot can always say there is something ungodly in Julie Andrews' choice of a widower to a nunnery.

More than to art, the bills pose a clear and present danger to freedom of expression. Or indeed to freedom of the press. This is not something only tabloids should be protesting against, all of media should. Jaworski's bill is especially frightening in that respect. It orders "all publishers of periodical publications, including newspapers, tabloids, magazines, comic books, and other similar printed materials (to) furnish all the Local Board complimentary copies of all their publications." The local board consisting "of the Municipality/City Mayor as its ex-officio Chairman, the Municipal/City Legal Officer as its ex-officio Secretary, the President of the Liga ng mga Barangay, the President of the Pambayang Pederasyon ng mga Sangguniang Kabataan, and a representative from the women sector of the locality as its members."

Can an idea be more insidious, or idiotic? That is a throwback to the days of the Bureau of Standards for Mass Media, which Marcos created immediately after he imposed martial law to police the media. You'll still find it in countries like Malaysia where a board of bureaucrats and ass-lickers—that is pornographic—sit in judgment over media.

And finally, these bills pose a danger to the society itself. I don't know if this is part of a plan to shift gears toward authoritarianism, but plan or not, it can be used to shift gears toward iron-fisted rule. It is all of a piece with the rhetoric and practice of anti-terrorism and with calls for emergency measures to meet all sorts of threats for the most part of government's own making. Anti-smut has always been the Trojan horse of fascism. It was so in Germany, when Nazi youth raided cabarets and Jewish synagogues alike, proclaiming both to be obscenities. Ironically, the cabarets became the last bastion of defense, in the form of satirical revues, against the coming of night.

Give bureaucrats and ass-lickers power and they are not going to stop at pornography, they are not going to stop at anything. The point is not to choose between the five bills, to embrace the one as more reasonable than the other. The point is to reject them altogether. The job of policing the ranks of media belongs to media, however they have often been remiss in it. That is so for all excesses of media, from lack of sensitivity to lack of taste.

The alternative is more than worse, it is disastrous.

Clutching at golden straws

COMMENTARY

John J. Carroll, S.J.
Institute on Church and Social Issues

FACING a financial crisis and a credit downgrade, and its inability either to collect taxes already on the books or to impose new ones, the administration appears to be clutching at straws in the effort to keep itself and the nation afloat. Chief among these straws, it seems, is a revitalized mining industry. Yet there is good reason to ask whether these golden straws will really keep the nation afloat and not drag it further down.

Since the surprising turnabout by the Supreme Court in declaring the Mining Act of 1995 constitutional and allowing 100 percent participation by foreign firms, Filipinos have been informed many times over about the billions of dollars' worth of minerals hidden in the bowels of their earth. Moreover, in an effort to allay fears based on past experience, government speakers at the recent international mining conference designed to attract foreign investors were in fulsome praise of the "new breed" of socially responsible mining companies.

In a similar effort, the President herself went all-out, insisting that systems are in place which will assure protection of the environment, the rights of indigenous communities, sharing of profits with local communities and rehabilitation of the area once a mine is closed. We were assured, moreover, that a massive cleanup of old mining sites would be undertaken, beginning with the Marcopper site in Marinduque.

Interestingly, however, at almost the same time as the mining conference was being held, the final report of the United States Geological Survey (USGS) Team on the situation left behind by Marcopper and its Canadian partner Placer Dome was being "released." The study reportedly was ready last July; yet only in January was it "released" in private closed-door meetings with the Department of Health and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Not a word appeared in the Manila press about it.

Why was the report kept under wraps? Perhaps because it repeated what earlier studies had pointed out: the four dams built by Marcopper on the Mogpog River are in grave danger of bursting, with disastrous consequences for the environment and human life. The failure of the company to repair the dams, despite repeated warnings, on top of the disaster which it had already wreaked on the environment, would not have sat well with the image of the "new breed" of responsible mining companies which the administration is promoting.

Likewise, unreported in the Manila press is the case of the Canadian mining firm TVI Pacific in Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte. Catherine Coumans, Ph.D., research coordinator of Mining Watch Canada, visited the area in October last year and wrote a detailed report, complete with eyewitness accounts and photographs, of totally inadequate environmental protection, damage to the environment and fish-kills, manipulation of "community consent," militarization, and unprovoked violence on the part of company guards. One wonders where are the safeguards of which the President speaks, and where indeed is the vaunted "new breed" of mining companies.

With regard to the safeguards, Horacio Ramos, director of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), in a letter to the editor, listed those enshrined in the Mining Act of 1955. The list is impressive indeed, but the question remains whether the government has the technical capacity and the political will to carry out its mandate in this area.

Allow me to recall a privilege speech delivered in Congress by Marinduque Rep. Edmundo O. Reyes Jr. on March 18, 1999. In it he recounted how he had twice asked the MGB to analyze water samples from the Boac and Mogpog Rivers. The reports he received were totally unsatisfactory, and did not indicate whether the water posed a health hazard or not. Eventually a group from the Ateneo de Manila did the study, and found that the copper levels in the Mogpog River were three times the acceptable standards. So much for technical capacity.

On the matter of political will, one might reflect on the government's failure to control illegal logging despite its disastrous consequences and the fact that illegal loggers are small potatoes in comparison with multinational mining firms. Or on the fact that on two occasions, Marcopper received "cease and desist" orders enjoining it to stop dumping its tailings into Calancan Bay; and twice it managed to have the order overturned by the Office of the President. On the second occasion, the company suddenly closed the mine, dismissed its workers, and cut off the electricity which it had been supplying to the whole island! That is the kind of hard-ball which a company, especially perhaps a large foreign company, can play once it is established in an area and has a sizeable workforce dependent on it.

Does this mean that the nation should allow its mineral treasures to remain locked forever in the earth? No indeed. But it might be wise to wait until the government is politically, economically and technologically in a stronger position to deal with hard-ball-playing multinationals. The minerals will not go away, and are perhaps the last natural resource which this generation can bequeath to the next.

As a first step toward demonstrating political will, the government might insist that Marcopper and Placer Dome rehabilitate the Boac and Mogpog Rivers, and compensate the fisherfolk for the damage done to Calancan Bay. Or it might revive the long-forgotten criminal case against Placer Dome executives who were responsible for the Boac spill of 1995.

Equality and respect

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

A RECENT visitor to the country, under the auspices of the US Embassy, was Dr. Carol Swain, a professor of political science and of law at Vanderbilt University, whose work on "representation and race relations" has won her recognition in the United States and abroad.

Dr. Swain had been brought around to different institutions in the country, including Miriam College in Manila and Xavier University in Cagayan de Oro, to speak on "the global legacy of the civil rights movement," culling lessons learned from the struggle of African-Americans for equal rights and equal treatment under the law to inspire other minority groups in other countries in their own struggles.

"The issues have changed," Dr. Swain told me in an interview after I asked if the American civil rights struggle still holds relevance to people in a post-9/11 world. "But there are lessons to be shared on a global scale." She draws inspiration, she said, from the words of Martin Luther King, who declared that "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

Dr. Swain's speaking tour has brought her to Malaysia and Indonesia as well as to Burma. She was scheduled to leave for Vietnam some days after our interview. Despite the skepticism of many Muslims, who may have nursed doubts about what an American academic could possibly tell them about minority rights, Dr. Swain says she eventually found receptive audiences. "Nothing beats face-to-face communication," she notes, and when she tells the story about how black leaders, including King and Malcolm X, rooted much of their ideology and preaching on their own journeys of faith, her audiences respond sympathetically.

* * *

"THE STORY of Malcolm X is particularly inspiring," says Dr. Swain. Though he had converted to Islam while in prison and preached a radical ideology of black separatism, after making his haj and delving deeper into the teachings of the Koran, Malcolm X returned to his homeland preaching a gentler, more inclusive message. Who knows how much farther he would have gone if he hadn't been assassinated a short time later?

Dr. Swain's advice to minority groups everywhere seeking recognition and respect is: "find sympathetic members of the majority" who will be crucial in advancing the minority's cause. "The civil rights movement is depicted mostly as being led by African-Americans, but there were also large numbers of sympathetic whites, especially Jewish leaders, whose support was crucial."

Her impression from the exchanges she has had with Filipino Muslims, says Dr. Swain, is that "they feel that the media are especially biased against them." But if the majority of Filipino Christians truly want peace in Mindanao, she reflects, "it is important for the Christians to show mutual respect for Muslims." She adds: "If you are serious about bringing people to the negotiating table, then you must first listen to what they have to say and respond to it."

* * *

DR. SWAIN is best known as the author of two provocative works that, she predicts, are "sleepers" just waiting for the right time before bursting into the consciousness of the American public.

Her first book, published in 1994, "Black Faces, Black Interests: The Representation of African Americans in Congress," won many prizes and provoked discussion on minority politics and whether this best serves the interests of the neediest members of ethnic minority groups. Her latest work, "The New White Nationalism in America: Its Threat to Integration," has made her even more controversial for even as it examines evidence of a growing trend of white supremacy, she also brings into question the continuing need for affirmative action programs based solely on race.

Rather than basing qualifications solely on race or ethnicity, she says, such programs should be based on economic status and need. As she told an American interviewer: "Usually when institutions of higher education talk about diversity, they're talking about racial or ethnic diversity. Unfortunately, the manifestation of that on campus is that 'diverse' people come from similar backgrounds, and are almost the same person, only in different colors and shades. What I would like to see is a diversity that includes religion, social class, etc.... I'd like to see a diversity that would bring different opinions and people from different backgrounds to campus. However, I don't think this will occur by using the affirmative action measures that we have in place today on college campuses."

* * *

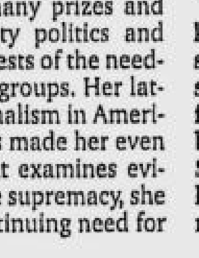
FUNNY enough, Dr. Swain's personal journey looks like a testimony to the power of affirmative action.

Raised in rural Virginia by poor parents, she was a high school dropout who married early and was motivated to seek higher education only after her marriage failed and she realized that "I couldn't support my children on the wages I was earning." After passing a high school equivalency exam, she won a scholarship to Roanoke College, setting her sights on a career in management. Turned down for a job after graduation allegedly because of her lack of qualifications, she then worked for a master's degree and then a Ph.D., and a master's in law, setting herself on the road to an academic career. "If I hadn't been turned away so many times, I would never have reached the place where I am now," she declares.

Twice married and divorced—"I had the knack for choosing men who were less than responsible," she says ruefully—Dr. Swain pursued her goals even as she looked after her family. Perhaps it's this "raise yourself by the bootstraps" philosophy that makes Carol Swain today a provocative, "hard to pigeonhole" thinker and speaker, with a message that resonates with people around the world.

Other unfinished Rizal manuscripts

LOOKING BACK



Ambeth R. Ocampo

SOME readers have e-mailed to ask for more information on the two unfinished works of Jose Rizal summarized in last Friday's column. For those who want to read "Reminiscences of a Cock" and "The Lord Gazes at the Philippine Islands," these can be found in a little-known compilation called "Rizal's Prose" (Vol. III Book 2 of the Writings of Jose Rizal series published by the Jose Rizal National Centennial Commission in 1962 and recently reprinted by the National Historical Institute).

Another volume in the series of similar interest is "Miscellaneous Writings" of Rizal, which contains a mixed bag ranging from his medical notebooks, to "Rules for the Determination of the Dimensions of Parapets," and a list of shells he collected in Dapitan. "Prose" is basically on literary works while "Miscellaneous Writings" is just that, stray pieces on a variety of topics not easily classified: notes on Tagalog orthography, the treatment of the bewitched (or how to cure a victim of a *mangkukulam*), and one of the few articles Rizal originally wrote in English, this being his retelling of the famous Philippine folktale "The Monkey and the Turtle." As everything is translated from the original Spanish or French or Tagalog, some people are misled into thinking that Rizal wrote some fairy tales that include "The Ugly Duckling" because the compiler forgot to mention that these tales by Hans Christian Andersen were translated into Tagalog and illustrated by Rizal for his nephews and nieces. These are best read in Rizal's original Tagalog.

It is truly unfortunate that a hero who left so much writing is so seldom read by his people. Maybe we are so conditioned to associate Rizal with nationalism and holidays that we forget he can be an engaging writer on a wide range of topics. To read him is to rediscover not just another aspect of the hero but a way to understand ourselves as Filipinos.

Before we go any further, I must correct a mistake in Friday's column that said Rizal placed the last period on the "Noli Me Tangere" in Berlin at 11:30 p.m. on Feb. 25, 1887. I checked with my offset copy of the manuscript and realized two things: first, the date should be Feb. 21, 1887, and, second, that my memory is starting to slip. Nevertheless, opening the above volumes of Rizal's writings brought out more forgotten material, like a fable that is worth reprinting here:

"Once two friends found a clam near the sea. They debated as to who would have it.

"'I, one said, 'saw it first.'

"'But I picked it up,' replied his friend.

"They went to court and asked the judge to settle the question. The judge opened the shell, ate the meat, and divided the shell between the litigants. A reminder to those fond of resorting to the courts of justice."

Another unfinished story or novel is quite similar to George Orwell's "Animal Farm." First published in 1946, Orwell set the story in a place called Manor Farm, renamed Animal Farm after a successful revolt of the animals that drove out the humans. The leader of the animals was a pig named Napoleon.

In Rizal's story the leader of the animals is also a pig, named Botiok. In this farm lived an efficient farmhand named Suan, who produced healthy and productive animals. One day, for some unknown reason, the animals turned sickly. Egg production dropped, the turkeys lost the sheen on their feathers and the other animals grew thin. This was strange, because there was no epidemic of animal disease at the time. The narrator, who was born on St. Solomon's Day, had the gift of understanding the language of animals, so he climbed and hid in a *makopa* tree to eavesdrop on the animals. Here he discovered that the animals, like humans, had a social structure of their own, with the pig at the head of their society. The great grand pig who had been castrated two years earlier and awaited slaughter for the Christmas table, was named Botiok and asked the other farm animals to obey him. "We the pigs are the superior race; you're an inferior race. Who will deny it? None of you has a snout as long and mobile as ours."

A turkey countered with "Ticaticatoccatoc!" which in translation meant "But we have a long and hanging red chest!"

Botiok replied: "But you don't have our broad ears."

"But we have a beard," replied another turkey.

Botiok, unimpressed, said: "Of course, you have a chest and beard, but you don't have the high honor of having been touched by Suan, our God and Lord. You aren't consecrated, that is, you aren't castrated like us; in this, you're inferior!"

A hen interrupted by saying: "There are also castrated cocks!"

Yet again Rizal left the manuscript unfinished, and on this note, the untitled work now known as "Suan's Animals" comes to an abrupt end.

Orwell left us with a fable on the failure of totalitarianism by showing Napoleon the pig living off the toil of other farm animals, walking on its hind legs and entertaining the very same humans they had booted out of the farm. Orwell showed that a line dividing pigs from men had been blurred, while Rizal's anti-clerical story seems to point to the fact that the line that divided pigs from friars was also blurred.

How this fable would have turned out, we will never know. But sometimes it is in the what-ifs that history becomes quite lively. Happy reading.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Toys: more than play

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

SOME of you may have seen one of the Lego toys which allows children to assemble their own robots. My sister, who works with children as an occupational therapist, loves these toys but was aghast to find out recently that local distributors sometimes offer to assemble the robots for the kids!

This offer to pre-assemble the robot defeats the whole purpose of the toy, which is to help with a child's physical and mental development. It's not just Lego toys that have this function. Generally, toys are tools for a child to interact, through fun and play, with the world and with people.

Nature has built this play mode into the early life of animals to prepare them for survival. Watch puppies and kittens at play and it's hard to miss the parallels with human martial arts designed to hone motor skills as well as the brain's ability to detect threats and opportunities.

Animals have "toys," too. Again, we've seen our pets totally engrossed with a crumpled piece of paper, or a stick, or a ball—nature's way of sharpening mind-body coordination. Humans have gone a step further to create all kinds of toys that have made play even more exciting—and educational.

Unfortunately, toys have taken on a new function in our consumerist, class-conscious society. Toys have become status symbols, children demanding them because their classmates have them, too. A pre-assembled Lego robot becomes a trophy ("My parents are rich enough to buy this!") rather than a tool for play and for education.

Making sense of the world

In early childhood, toys are important mainly for developing visual and cognitive skills, for helping the child to make sense of the bewildering but exciting world out there. You don't need expensive fancy toys for this. String together different objects, hang them from the ceiling and your infant will be kept busy all day, cooing away as she watches the mobile twirling around.

Lego toys build on a child's natural curiosity, the need to assemble and disassemble, without any rules except to let imagination run free. But good toys don't always have to come from stores. Watch urban poor kids transform a discarded rubber slipper into a little boat, to be floated down a canal. An empty alcohol bottle, or a powder container, becomes a car or a truck, with wheels cut out of old rubber slippers and connected with *walis tingting* (broomsticks). Simply making these toys sharpens the mind and fine-tunes manual skills.

Toys are in a sense simulators that help children to learn to solve problems. Go to your kitchen and get a glass or cup, and find little objects—pebbles, clips, trinkets—to use for a little hide-and-seek game with your infant. Point to an object and then cover it with the cup. The child begins to wonder what happened to the trinkets. Take away the cup and they rediscover the trinkets. A silly game? Not at all. The child begins to figure out presence and absence. (A modification on this, without any toys needed, is for you to play hide and seek behind a door, a chair—those of us raising children know this can just go on endlessly.)

Older children are more sophisticated. You can tell which kids are going to be particularly sharp, the ones who are always assembling and disassembling stuff at home, from clocks to cell phones. Exasperated with all the stuff they've disassembled and can't get back together? Then give them mechanical objects that have broken down, and let them play to their heart's content. (Do be careful though: young children shouldn't be allowed to play with objects that have small parts. They might put these in their mouths and choke.)

Social values

Toys converge with games for another important problem-solving function: figuring out one's place in society, and the norms for being a social being. Values of sharing, of self-esteem and mastery in accomplishments, of humility when one's less successful, of winning and losing graciously—all these come as children handle toys and games with other children (and adults). If you only have one or two children, make sure they get to play with other relatives, or with the neighbor's children.

Toys are "loaded" with value messages. Toy guns glorify violence and aggression, while that imported Barbie doll is telling your little girl that to be pretty is to be Caucasian, dressed in a certain way, with a particular hairstyle, a particular demeanor, and to have certain physical attributes that are actually impossible to replicate in real life. (Barbie's "vital statistics" are too top-heavy—a real woman with her figure would fall flat on her face every time she tried to walk.)

I started out complaining about how a pre-assembled Lego robot reflects a distorted value: that of looking at objects as possessions and trophies. Likewise, if we buy toys simply because they're the latest, then we encourage children to be superficial and trendy. Don't be surprised later in life if they insist on the latest models of cell phones, or electronic gadgets, or cars.

Children can sense, too, when parents use toys (and television) as a substitute for nurturing, a way of distancing themselves from the responsibilities of child-rearing. Social Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman rightly warned recently about how television is dumbing down young Filipinos. I'd agree, and warn too that the dangers come with both television and toys becoming substitutes for parenting, a way for adults to distance themselves from the responsibilities of child-rearing. Toys are only as good as the social interaction that is provided by playmates, caregivers and parents. And if your child proclaims that he or she's bored with a roomful of toys, it just may be a distress signal. The child needs simpler but more fulfilling pleasures that come with reading, or a walk, or just time together.

We might want to ask ourselves, too, about how we respond to children at play. When they bombard you with questions, when they insist on exploring every shape, every hue, every smell of every object in a room, we scold them, "*Kulit!*" and "*Likot!*" It's time for a paradigm shift here. "*Galing!*" in praise of inquisitiveness and innovation, tenacity and agility become appropriate for a child who has exuberantly discovered the joys of learning in toys and games.

* * *

Announcement: This is a bit late, but I hope some of you can catch up. The Philosophy Department of UP's College of Social Sciences and Philosophy in Diliman, Quezon City, is sponsoring a series of lectures by Dr. Michael Fox, a veterinarian and bioethicist, from March 2 to 4. Co-sponsors are the Philippine Animal Welfare Society and Bodhi Vegetarian Restaurant. Call UP Bioethics (926-1008) or PAWS (475-1688) for more information, or proceed directly to the NISMED auditorium in UP Diliman. Today's lectures are on "Animal Awareness, Emotions, Care and Rights" and "Cat and Dog Behavior, Development and Communication."

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Suspension or dismissal of corrupt officials is not enough

I AM a little bit disappointed with the editorial titled "No. 2" (PDI, 2/14/05), which commended the Office of the Ombudsman for suspending Deputy Customs Commissioner Reynaldo S. Nicolas for six months.

We, at Nagmamalasakit na mga Manananggol ng mga Manggagawang Pilipino Inc. (Manananggol), view this suspension and the dismissal of corrupt government officials as a reward for these wicked people.

In the case of Nicolas, the Ombudsman has concrete evidence of his ill-gotten wealth. Why didn't the Ombudsman attach, as a preliminary course of action, his ill-gotten wealth as provided for under Section 15 par. 11 of Republic Act 6770 which created the Office of the Ombudsman? The Revised Penal Code has also a provision on the preliminary attachment of property fraudly acquired.

Another case in point is the case of Customs official 'Manuel Valencia who was only dismissed from the service by Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo. So, the former enjoys his ill-gotten wealth up to now.

These two cases show that instead of discouraging grafters, the Office of the Ombudsman is encouraging the commission of graft and corruption. After all, ill-gotten wealth is not confiscated as being done in progressive countries like Finland, Hong Kong, Sweden, the United States, etc. Instead, the grafters are rewarded with early retirement with their loot intact for them and their families to enjoy.

As a delegate of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines to a 1999 convention on Combating Corruption in Asian and Pacific Economies, I was able to talk to an official of the International Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) of Hong Kong. He told me that confiscation of ill-gotten wealth is one of the effective weapons against grafters in Hong Kong. Why hasn't the Ombudsman adopt this method of the ICAC whose top official was invited by President Macapagal-Arroyo last year?

With due respect to the Office of the Ombudsman, we suspect that the answer could be that some of its graft investigators and officials get to partake of the ill-gotten wealth.

—PROCOPIO S. BELTRAN JR.,
president,
Nagmamalasakit na mga Manananggol ng mga Manggagawang Pilipino Inc. (Manananggol),
Rm. 236 Regina Bldg.,
Escolta, Manila

Bohol's heritage safe with DPWH project

THIS is in response to the commentary "Graft-prone DPWH destroying Bohol heritage." (PDI, 5/7/05) Allow us to explain:

1. The project referred to by Augusto F. Villalon—wherein "one of the old houses in Baclayon the DPWH wants to topple to make way for a highway"—is the Bohol Circumferential Road Improvement Project (BCRIP). It runs from Valencia to Tagbilaran City, then to Calape. This road passes through a spot where the Baclayon century-old Church and a number of antique houses are located.

2. In response to the petition/request of Baclayon residents and in support of the decree making the town of Baclayon a National Cultural Heritage, the project consultants decided to revise the project contract so that no house of precious heritage and priceless legacy will be demolished.

3. It has been agreed that not a single "antique" building will be touched during the construction. In a worst scenario, only the fence will be demolished to comply with the required width of the carriageway.

We assure all concerned that no heritage houses will be affected by the BCRIP.

—MARLINA S. ALVIZO,
assistant regional director
for construction operations,
Department of Public Works and Highways,
Office of the Regional Director,
Region 7, Cebu City

Illegal sirens

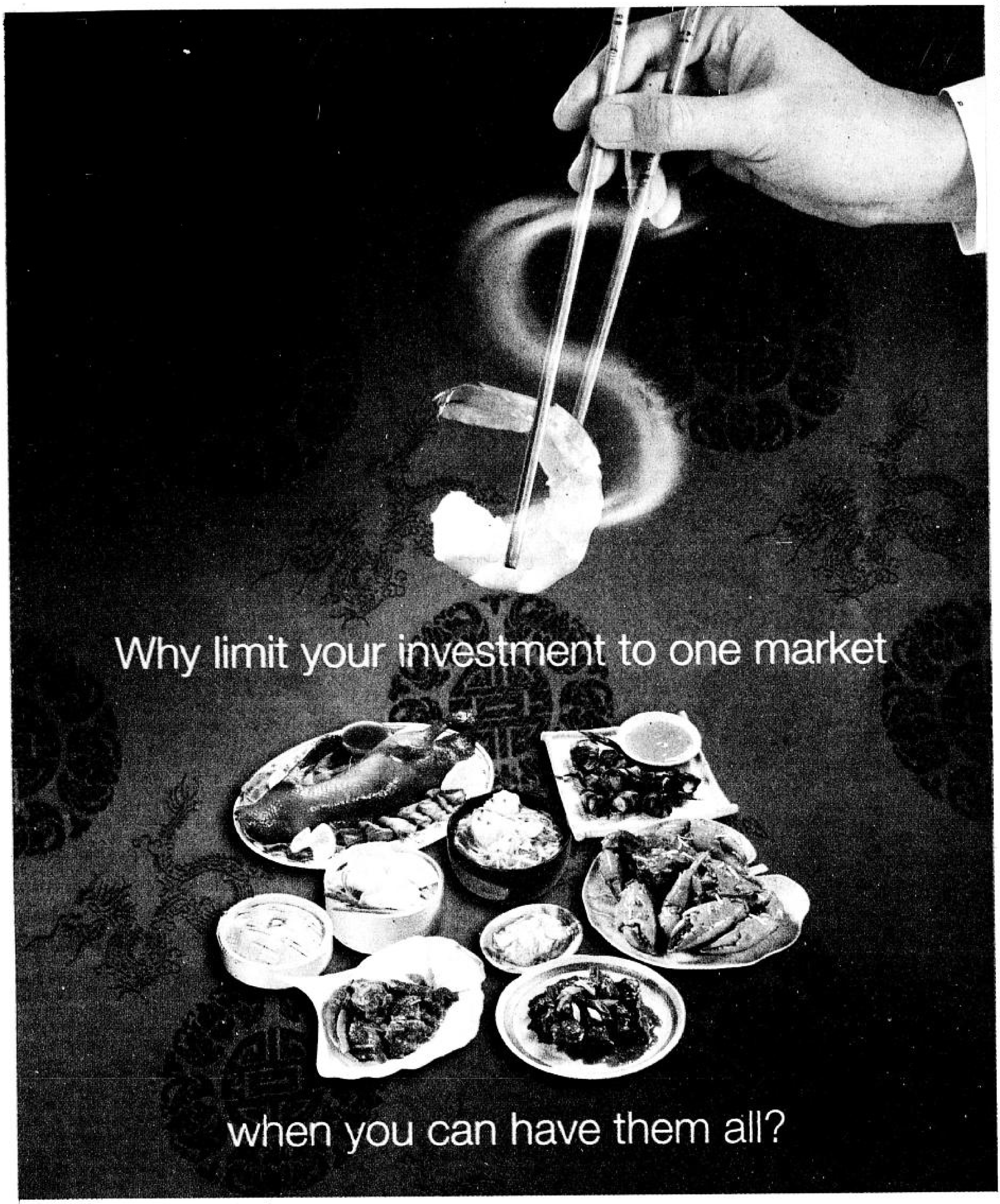
ON JAN. 5, 2005, I saw an unmarked white Ford car cruising along Wilson Street, San Juan, with emergency police blinkers mounted on its roof.

Is it legal for civilian cars to use emergency blinkers? Allowing this practice poses a danger to innocent civilians, who can no longer distinguish between a real and a fake police. Moreover, the fakes usually act like warlords on the road when their illegal blinkers and sirens are turned on.

I have noticed so many civilian cars mounted with police blinkers. So many private motorcycles now have horns imitating a mini-police siren.

I think the media should use their influence to stamp out these illegal police blinkers and sirens.

—DREX CORONEL,
Project 7, Quezon City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E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph

INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

'Adivay': Rediscovering Benguet in new festival

By Maurice Malanes
La Trinidad, Benguet

FOUR young women milled around an elder in g-string squatting inside a grass-thatched wooden hut on the grounds of the Benguet State University in La Trinidad, Benguet.

They asked Luis Dao-anis, 73, how mothers give birth the traditional way in the upland town of Kibungan, 62 km north of the provincial capital of La Trinidad.

The women, who turned out to be nursing students, were amazed when Dao-anis related how his wife delivered all her seven children at home with just the help of their neighbors.

They were all the more awed when he told them how Kankanaey folk would cut the umbilical cords of newborns using sharpened wild bamboos.

"When my wife would give birth, I automatically would take over my wife's traditional chores, such as getting food for and feeding the pigs. I also had to wash diapers on top of my work in the farm," Dao-anis told the students, who were carefully taking down notes.

Dao-anis joined a team of elders and officials led by Kibungan Mayor Murphy Paayas that transported an antique traditional Kankanaey hut to La Trinidad for a new cultural and trade festival called "Adivay."

The 2.5-square-meter traditional hut was Kibungan's trade and cultural booth for the festival, which involved all the 13 Benguet towns. Each town also built a booth for its farm crops and crafts.

The nursing students from a university in neighboring Baguio City chanced upon Dao-anis among the thousands of people who came when the festival opened Feb. 25.

That the women were able to learn something about traditional birth delivery and parenthood from Dao-anis was something unique about the Adivay Festival, whose theme was "Rediscovering Benguet."

Cultural education

"This (festival) is not only about discovering and rediscovering the products and crafts of Benguet. It is also about rediscovering and appreciating the various facets of the Benguet people's rich culture," said lawyer Damaso Bangaoet Jr., festival co-chair.

From the Kibungan booth alone, an informal education on culture has begun taking place. And Dao-anis, who didn't expect to be giving an impromptu lecture about Kankanaey culture, became the "professor."

Donning a faded vest and a red turban to match his red-striped g-string, the elder thought he would just be sitting inside the hut to attract visitors and tourists to buy the town's display of unpolished rice, ceramics, woven backpacks and bamboo baskets.

But he had to patiently answer the questions of visitors. "Why didn't you use nails in building this hut?" a young visitor asked, noting how the wooden frames of the hut were fastened through wooden bolts and how other frames for the roofing were tied using vines, rattan and bamboo strips.

3-story house

"By using just wooden bolts and vines, we can easily transfer our house," said Dao-anis, explaining how the Kankanaey, during earlier times, would transfer from one place to another as they left their upland swidden farms fallow for a new upland farm.

Another group was amazed when Dao-anis described the one-room hut as a three-story house.

"The first floor (which is actually the ground under the elevated floor) is for chickens and pigs; the second floor (actually the elevated and the only floor to which one enters through a bamboo ladder) is for people; and the third floor (which is some sort of a ceiling made of reeds) is for drying *pagey* (unhusked rice)," the elder said, citing how the late Paguli Bolislis, a respected Kibungan elder, had described the traditional Kankanaey house.

At their booth, officials and elders of Kabayan have also been busy explaining to visitors the process involved in how their dead ancestors were mummified.

In all the 13 booths, products and crafts were not the only elements of Adivay, which in Ibaloi means a gathering of people celebrating land's abundance.

Since Adivay also means a meeting of minds, the festival, which lasts until March 6, is an avenue for cultural education for those interested.

Baguio through the eyes of 'balikbayan' Japanese

By Elizabeth Lolarga
Contributor

EINOSUKE Rudy Furuya is a fit, trim septuagenarian from Yokohama who feels reborn because for the first time in his long career as a commercial photographer, he is having his first exhibition and not in Japan but in the homeland of his heart, Baguio City.

DAYTOY TI AMIANAN

"A Sense of Baguio Through Einosuke Rudy Furuya's Eyes," a collection of color photographs, is on show at the Galerya Kordilyera of the University of the Philippines Baguio until March 12.

At the center of the gallery are black and white shots of the city and the author's family taken by his father and studio assistant in the 1930s. They are mounted on a low platform like a dialogue of the way they were and the way things are now.

Born in 1933 at the Notre Dame Hospital in the mountain city, Furuya had among his first visitors, Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo and his wife Maria, old family friends. (When Hideko Kitamura and Shonosuke Furuya got married, Aguinaldo invited them to honeymoon in Kawit, Cavite.) The nuns running the hospital were surprised when they saw the VIPs enter the room.

FURUYA'S "Swans Resting, Burnham Lake"

The general declared that since the emperor of Japan wanted to have a son to continue the line of succession, the Furuya boy should have both Japanese and Filipino names. He chose Rodolfo Francis, but since it was too long, it was shortened to Rudy.

Furuya considered his childhood pure bliss. Free time was spent playing with tops, yoyo, marbles, and the games *sipa* and a combination of *patintero* and *agawan* base with local boys.

This sharpened his fluency in the Iloko language. At home, Japanese was spoken. He and his playmates made Burnham Park their stomping grounds, and sometimes they ran around the public market.

Storybook Baguio

In what could only be described as something happening in a still storybook Baguio, he walked around the city, picking strawberries and fallen fruits and eating them.

His family enjoyed a middle-class life, his father being the manager of the Japanese Bazaar's Pine Studio on Session Road. The idyll ended when they were rounded up by the US military in Kiangan, Ifugao, where they fled during the war, and were eventually sent to Japan.

Regarding his repatriation, Furuya said through translator Marie Dolores Teraoka Escaño, "I was half happy because the war had ended and we would go to the country of my father. I was half-sad because I thought I would not be able to return to my birthplace anymore."

He continued: "When we went back to Japan, we were so poor. Our life was difficult. We suffered so much, unlike in Baguio when we were comfortable. Maybe you'll find it funny but whenever I am asked in Japan where I was born, I always answer, 'In Baguio in the Philippines,' because I consider Baguio my hometown, not Japan.

"After the war, although the prospect of returning to Baguio remained dim, the more I felt nostalgic. Whenever I dreamt, I always dreamt of Baguio. As I grew older, the more I felt my love for Baguio growing. If I had been born in Mindanao or Manila, I wouldn't think of Baguio so much, but it remained ever beautiful and wonderful in my mind."

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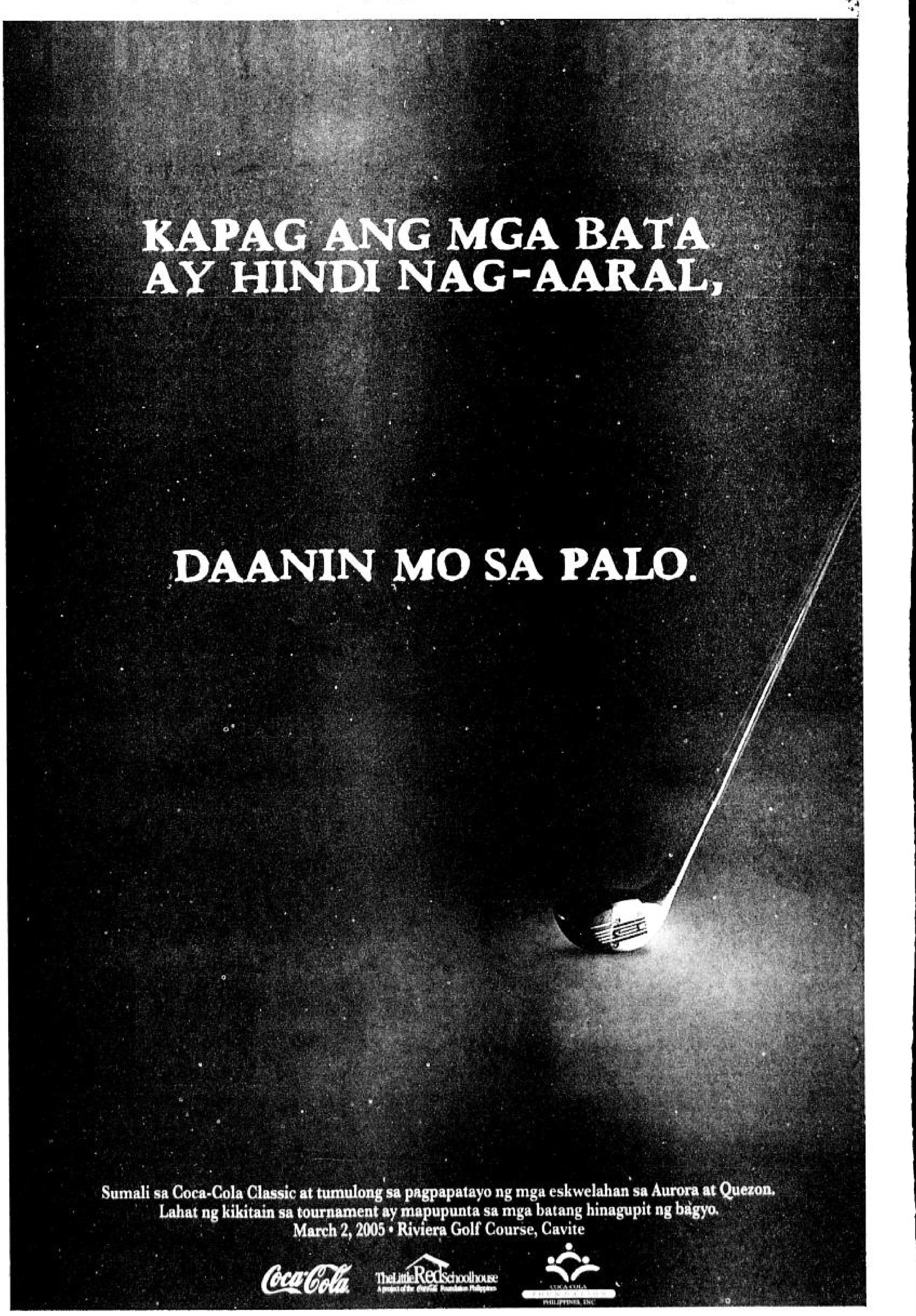

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More kidnappings thwarted, Army says

COTABATO CITY—The military yesterday said it had thwarted kidnapping attempts against 11 prominent personalities and Filipino-Chinese traders in Tacurong City and Koronadal South Cotabato when it clashed with suspected Pentagon gunmen in Maguindanao on Monday.

At least five Pentagon suspects, including two sub-commanders of notorious kidnap leader Alonto Tahir, died in the clash that occurred in Barangay Midpandakan in Sultan sa Barongis town.

Soldiers also recovered three high-powered firearms, including two rocket-propelled grenade launchers.

Col. Gerry Jalandoni, commander of the Army's 604th Infantry Brigade, said the Pentagon, which figured in various high profile kidnappings in Central Mindanao, parts of the Autonomous Region and the Zamboanga Peninsula, was again planning to snatch wealthy individuals for ransom.

"We hit them even before they could hit our innocent traders," he said.

Quoting intelligence reports, Lt. Col. Alexander Macario, chief of the Army's 66th Infantry Battalion, said the "neutralized" gang members were re-grouping in the marshland and were planning to strike at unsuspecting Filipino-Chinese traders.

Despite the "victory," the military said those who are most likely to be abducted should "institute extra measures."

The military also credited the Moro Islamic Liberation Front "who gave us the way" to the kidnappers' location in the marshland for the success of the operation.

The MILF is currently talking peace with the government.

Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said the MILF leadership was also elated by the "coordination" of the military.

"Unlike in previous military operations where the MILF ground troops were not informed, this one went very smooth," he said.

In previous military operations against the Pentagon, soldiers have always clashed with MILF rebels.

In Lanao del Sur, military authorities said kidnap victim Rogelio Creencia, a government soil and water management expert, might be handed over to the Pentagon gang.

Creencia was seized on Valentines Day in Lanao del Sur by "amateur kidnappers," according to Marine Brig. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino, Task Force Ranao commander. ***Edwin Fernandez and Charlie Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Negros local execs ready to declare tourism chief 'persona non grata'

By Romy G. Amarado
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—Some local officials are preparing to declare Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano *persona non grata* for excluding Dumaguete and the province from the promotion of the "I love Philippines, Biyahe Na," campaign.

Vice Governor Jose Baldado told the INQUIRER that he was willing to sponsor a resolution to declare Durano unwelcome in the province.

He said his colleagues in the provincial board were "very vocal" about the issue because they felt Durano was snubbing Negros Oriental following its exclusion from the Department of Tourism's marketing drive to invite domestic tourists and *balikbayans* to go travel in the country.

Baldado was supposed to bring up his resolution during the session on Feb. 24 but it did not push through due to the many important matters that were discussed by the legislative body at that time.

But he said the move might be pushed next session.

Durano earlier explained that some provinces were excluded from the promotion of "I love Philippines, Biyahe Na," because they lacked the facilities to cater to the needs of tourists.

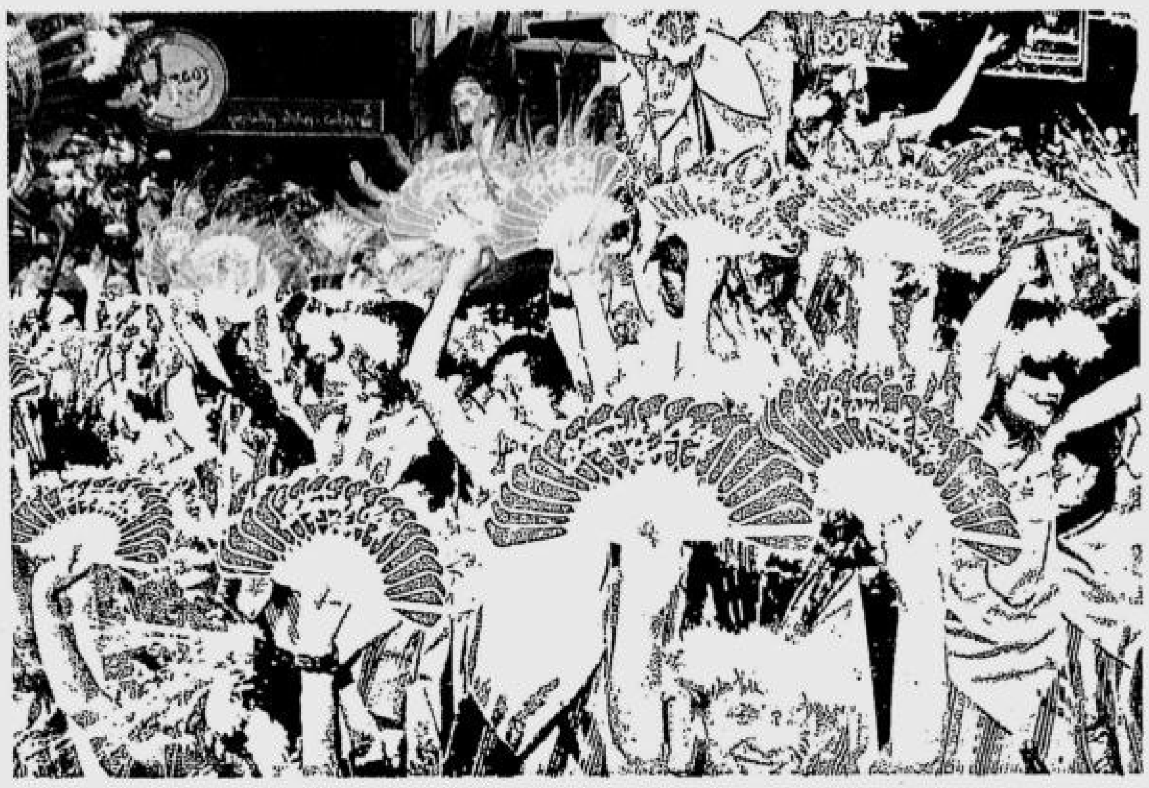
If the DOT would promote these provinces, he added, tourists would later discover that they could not be accommodated due to lack of facilities and would later blame the tourism department.

Without naming names, Durano said the DOT was now helping these "unprepared provinces" to develop their areas as tourist destinations.

But Negros Oriental Gov. George Arnaiz said Durano's explanation was "unfair" and "without basis."

He said Negros Occidental has aggressively promoted its tourism industry despite the lack of support from the DOT.

In fact, he added, the number of tourists coming in to the province has been growing. He, however, did not give figures of tourist arrivals in Negros Oriental.



COLOR PARADE PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU
A parade of colors fills the streets of Baguio City during its celebration of the Panagbenga festival which drew thousands of local and foreign visitors in the wake of a meningococcemia scare that gripped the country's summer capital.

Sugar planters seek GMA help for loans

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—The Philippine Sugar Alliance (PSA) will ask President Macapagal-Arroyo to endorse their bid for an P8-P12 billion loan from the Land Bank of the Philippines needed to set up a clearinghouse that will market their sugar to ensure stable millgate prices.

Manuel Lamata, president of the United Sugar Producers Federation of the Philippines (Unifed), said the PSA and Sugar Regulatory Administrator James Ledesma will ask the President to talk to the LBP to give them Quedan financing.

Quedan is a document issued by a sugar mill, attesting to the amount of sugar that the producer has in the mill.

The PSA is composed of four sugar federations—the Unifed, the National Federation of Sugarcane Planters (NFSP), Confederation of Sugar Producers (Confed) and Panay Federation (Panayfed).

Ms Arroyo is set to arrive in Negros Occidental today to visit a Gawad Kalinga housing project for agrarian reform beneficiaries in Hacienda Remedios, La Carlota City, and to distribute Certificates of Land Ownership Award.

In the evening, she is set to meet with the sugar leaders in Bacolod City to listen to their concerns.

Luis Lorenzo, former Presidential Adviser for Jobs Generation and Land Bank chair, encouraged Negros sugar industry leaders to make a direct appeal to the President to take up their cause of setting up a sugar marketing facility.

"I urge you to make it clear to the President that the growth of the sugar industry and the upliftment of sugar workers have a direct impact on the fulfillment of her 10-point agenda," said Lorenzo in his letter to the leaders of the four sugar federations.

In November, the Negros sugar producers had asked Lorenzo, then chair of the Land Bank, for a loan that would fund the creation of a sugar marketing facility that would ensure reasonable prices of sugar, free from the control of traders.

At the time, sugar prices had been plunging and sugar producers partly blamed this on price manipulation by traders.

In exchange, Lorenzo asked the producers to adopt a system of social amelioration where a percentage of revenue from the buying and selling of sugar through the sugar marketing arm would fund the upliftment of the poor through Gawad Kalinga.

Bride drowns as wedding party turns into tragedy

CEBU CITY—It was supposed to be a beach party to celebrate the forthcoming wedding of a relative to an American. But the merrymaking ended in tragedy when two siblings drowned, including the bride.

Myrna Selma, 28 and her brother Adriano, 18, died upon reaching the Isidro Kintanar Memorial Hospital in Argao town, about 66 km south of here.

Another sibling, Maritess, 16, was brought to the Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Center here after she nearly drowned.

The Selma siblings and their relatives were at the Mahayahay Beach in Barangay Poblacion, Argao on Sunday to celebrate Myrna's wedding to an American in San Fernando town, Cebu on Monday.

Mahayahay Beach is a resort developed by the Argao municipal government but its management has been turned over to the Argao Development Multi-purpose Cooperative (Ademco).

PO3 Arnold Abenir of the Argao Police station said Myrna and Maritess were swimming in the northern portion of the beach when they suddenly shouted for help.

Adriano, who heard them shouting, immediately responded, but he and Myrna were swept by the strong current and drowned.

Maritess was unconscious when she was rescued. She was given first aid before she was brought to the hospital, said Poblacion barangay captain Arnel de la Cruz.

De la Cruz, chair of the Ademco, dismissed allegations that lifeguards had been remiss in their duties, saying they spearheaded the rescue operations. ***Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau***

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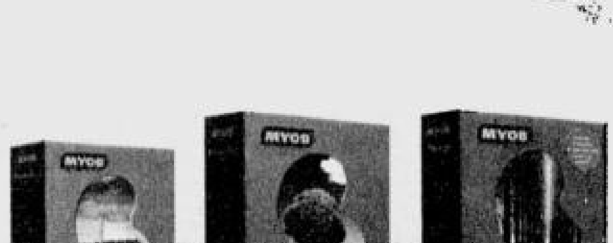

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ARMM teachers threaten to hold 'sit-down' strike

COTABATO CITY—Public schoolteachers in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) vowed to hold a sit-down strike anytime to protest the inability of education officials to remit their Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) premiums.

They also threatened not to perform poll duties in the ARMM elections scheduled on Aug. 8 this year.

Rolito Requerme, head of the 20,000-strong elementary and high school teachers in the ARMM, said for several months now, the teachers have been deprived of their loan privileges and other benefits from the GSIS.

HUSSIN

Requerme, Director Apang Napli and Edward Wee, both DepEd-ARMM officials, are now in Manila to follow up the teachers' complaint before the House of Representatives that passed Resolution 534 directing the House committee on good government to investigate DepEd-ARMM's failure to remit premiums and contributions to GSIS and other financial institutions.

The resolution was authored by party-list Representatives Mario Aguha, Rosita Ann Rosales and Ann Teresa Hontiveros and co-authored by 56 other lawmakers.

Lawmakers wanted to find out where the teachers' premiums and contributions went when these are automatically deducted from their pay, according to Requerme.

The resolution also sought to pinpoint responsibility for the mess.

"We are puzzled why until now this problem remains unresolved," Requerme said.

But ARMM Gov. Parouk Hussin, the DepEd-ARMM regional secretary in concurrent capacity, said steps have been taken to address the problem.

He said when he assumed office, the problem was already there.

"Interest charges are imposed on delayed remittances so the obligation kept growing with DepEd-ARMM's obligation to the GSIS ballooning," he said. *Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Girl, 3, dies in NPA attack on Army post

CALAMBA CITY—A three-year-old girl was killed while her mother and a militiaman were wounded after suspected members of the New People's Army (NPA) attacked a military detachment in a mountainous village in Rodriguez, Rizal on Monday night.

Col. Raymundo Ramones, officer-in-charge of the Philippine Army's 202nd Infantry Brigade, identified the victim as Berlen Doroteo, daughter of Rolando Doroteo, a member of the Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Unit (Cafgu) assigned to the area.

He said the victim's mother, Ligaya, and Cafgu member Carlito Cruz were also injured in the attack, which happened at around 8 p.m. in the Army's detachment in Barangay Puray.

Ramones said a certain Cesar "Ka Ruben" Batralo and Ka Eto of the NPA's Narciso Aramil Command led 15 other rebels in the attack on the military post. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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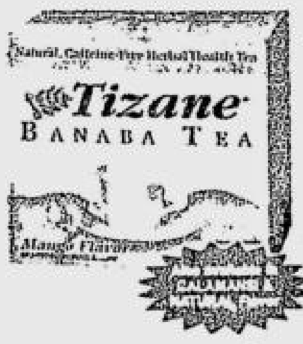

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2 soldiers recovering after ambush by NPAs

OROQUIETA CITY—Two soldiers were declared in a safe condition after suffering from bullet injuries as some 15 New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas ambushed a military jeep in Barangay Masubong of Sapang Dalaga town Monday.

Pvt. Armando Pable and a certain Pfc. Tankulla are now recuperating at the Misamis Occidental Provincial Hospital here where they were rushed for treatment after the attack.

Two other companions, Lt. Asari Tumpilan and Cpl. Jonathan Jantillan, were killed.

Interviewed over radio station dxDD in Ozamis City, Lt. Col. Raymundo de los Santos, deputy brigade commander of the Philippine Army's 101st Brigade, said the soldiers were negotiating their way downtown when the NPA rebels fired at them.

De los Santos said that based on reports from the field command, the guerrillas seem to have waited for the soldiers on the wayside underneath a thicket, indicating there could have been a tip off of their movement when they left their post in Barangay Upper Bautista uphill from the ambush scene.

The site of the ambush is about three kilometers from the nearest village center, said De los Santos.

Speaking over mobile phone, rebel spokesperson Ismael Marte said the ambush lasted for about 10 minutes after which the guerrillas burned the jeep. *Ryan Rosauro and Hernan de la Cruz, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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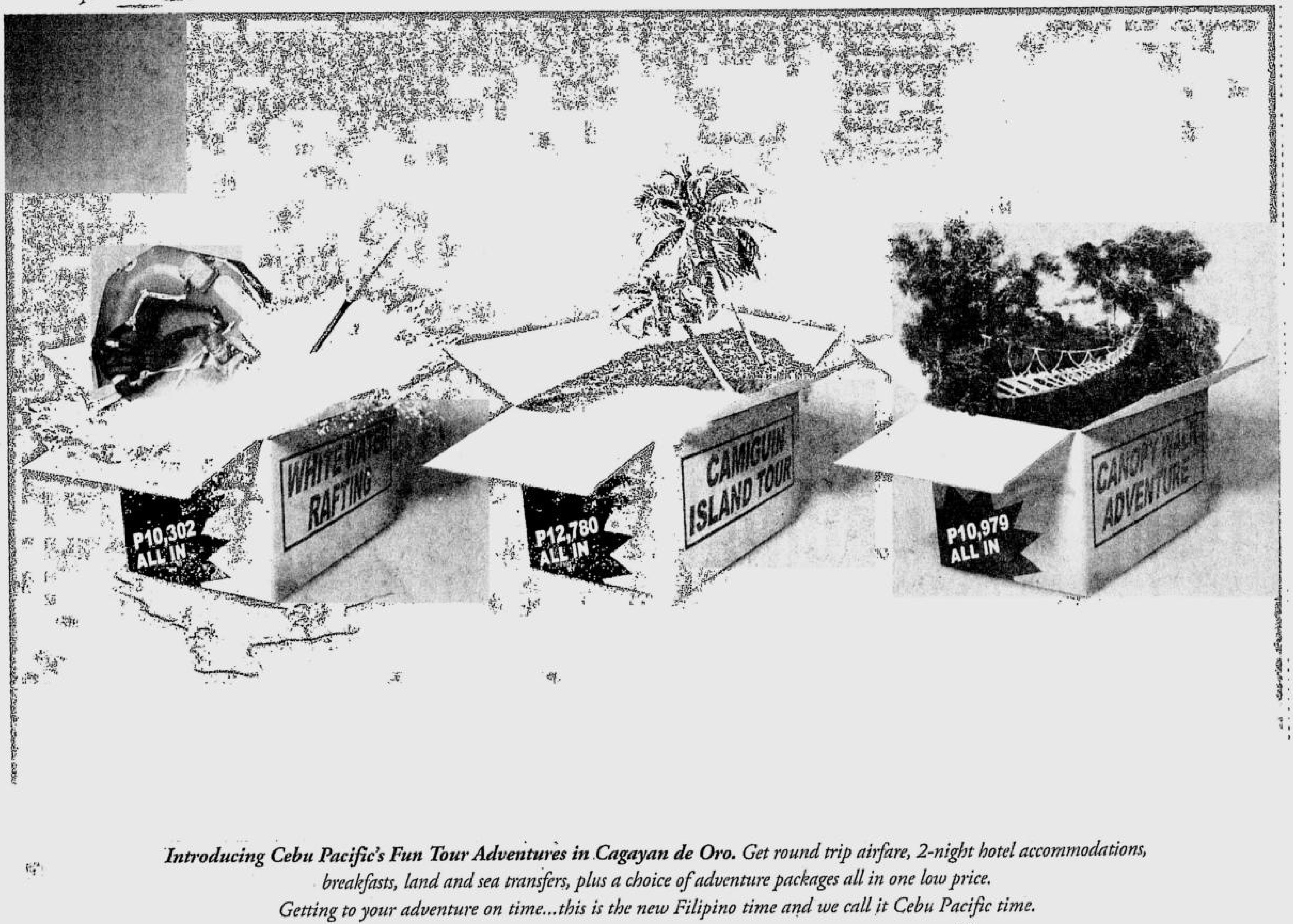

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CEBU PACIFIC

Pray for Pope, don't speculate on successor, Catholics told

From page A1

"This is one of the most futile things they can do. The successor of Peter is the concern of Christ. It is none of our business," he said.

The times call for prayers for the ailing Pontiff, the archbishop of Lingayen-Dagupan added in a statement.

Cruz sounded irritated that every time a Pope was sick, the world would conjecture without fail about his possible successor.

"It has been like this for almost 2,000 years. It is still the same during these times," he said.

At the Vatican City, a papal spokesperson said Tuesday that John Paul II's condition was improving as the 84-year-old leader of the world's more than one billion Roman Catholics continued his voice exercises following last week's surgery to ease his latest breathing crisis.

He has also started speaking again.

"The Holy Father spoke to me in German and Italian. He was very alert. He will be working on some of the documentation that I brought to him," said Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the guardian of Roman Catholic doctrine.

Vatican spokesperson Joaquin Navarro-Valls told reporters the Pope "spent a good night" at the hospital and was preparing to concelebrate Mass in his suite on the 10th floor of Rome's Gemelli Polyclinic.

'Bigger than life'

In his statement, Cruz said John Paul II "is truly bigger than life, a great vicar of Christ, a true man of God ... a loving father to the whole of humanity."

Cruz added: "But while the whole Catholic world prays for him, there are now some people here and there, who would rather speculate, rationalize and even pick his successor. While God has the Holy Father and the Church in his provident palm, there are certain sectors of society who presume to make predictions as to who should take his place and what would happen to the Church."

Cruz said that never was there a time in the history of the Church when the Catholic faithful were asked "to make polls, survey and the like as to who will be the pope."

2-way ticket never used

The archbishop cited a saying that "He who enters the conclave a Pope, comes out thereof a cardinal."

"This simply means when the conclave of cardinals [convenes] to elect the successor of Peter, the cardinal popularly predicted to become pope leaves the conclave still a cardinal, not the pope," he said.

Cruz said that before he was elected Pope, John Paul II was practically an unknown Polish cardinal.

"He went to Rome for the conclave of cardinals with a return plane ticket to Poland. This ticket was not used. The rest is history," he said.

Fragile

Throat specialists said patients like John Paul II should be able to speak normally again, although not as loudly.

John Paul II's recovery is complicated by Parkinson's disease, a degenerative neurologic disorder.

Parkinson's specialists said the debilitating neurological disease might well figure in more breathing crises for the Pontiff.

"We are in a stage where it's evident that the patient is fragile because of progression of a disease with a 15, 20-year history," said Giovanni Fabbrini, a neurologist at Rome's Umberto I Polyclinic.

Anguished flock

The Vatican hasn't said if the initial tube inserted during the tracheotomy would be removed.

Leaving in the tube would give John Paul II "a security valve," said Fabrizio Ottaviani, a throat specialist in Rome. "The moment he starts having problems all he has to do is take off the top, and the Pope can breathe again through the tube."

Deeply moved by health crisis, John Paul II's anguished flock is suffering alongside its stricken shepherd.

Around the world, the Catholic faithful are sending letters, e-mails and telegrams to John Paul II and organizing 24-hour prayer vigils. Spiritually and mentally, experts say, the anxiety is taking a toll on believers as it would for anyone fretting over the fate of a hospitalized loved one.

Even Hollywood takes pause

"What we forget is that for Catholics, a Pope is 'papa'—father—and as a result engenders feelings that would ordinarily be directed to a family member," said Dr. Charles Goodstein, a US professor of clinical psychiatry.

Non-Catholics, too, have been saddened by the plight of the Pope.

John Paul II has reached out to Orthodox Christians, Jews, Muslims and Hindus over his 26-year papacy.

Rome hospital visitor Mario Gaetano summed up the feeling: "He is a bit like everyone's grandfather. We don't want to imagine the worst."

Even the organizers of the Oscars said they had considered toning down the annual awards bash had the Pope died, underscoring how the Pontiff's plight has given even Hollywood pause. *With AP, AFP and Reuters wires*

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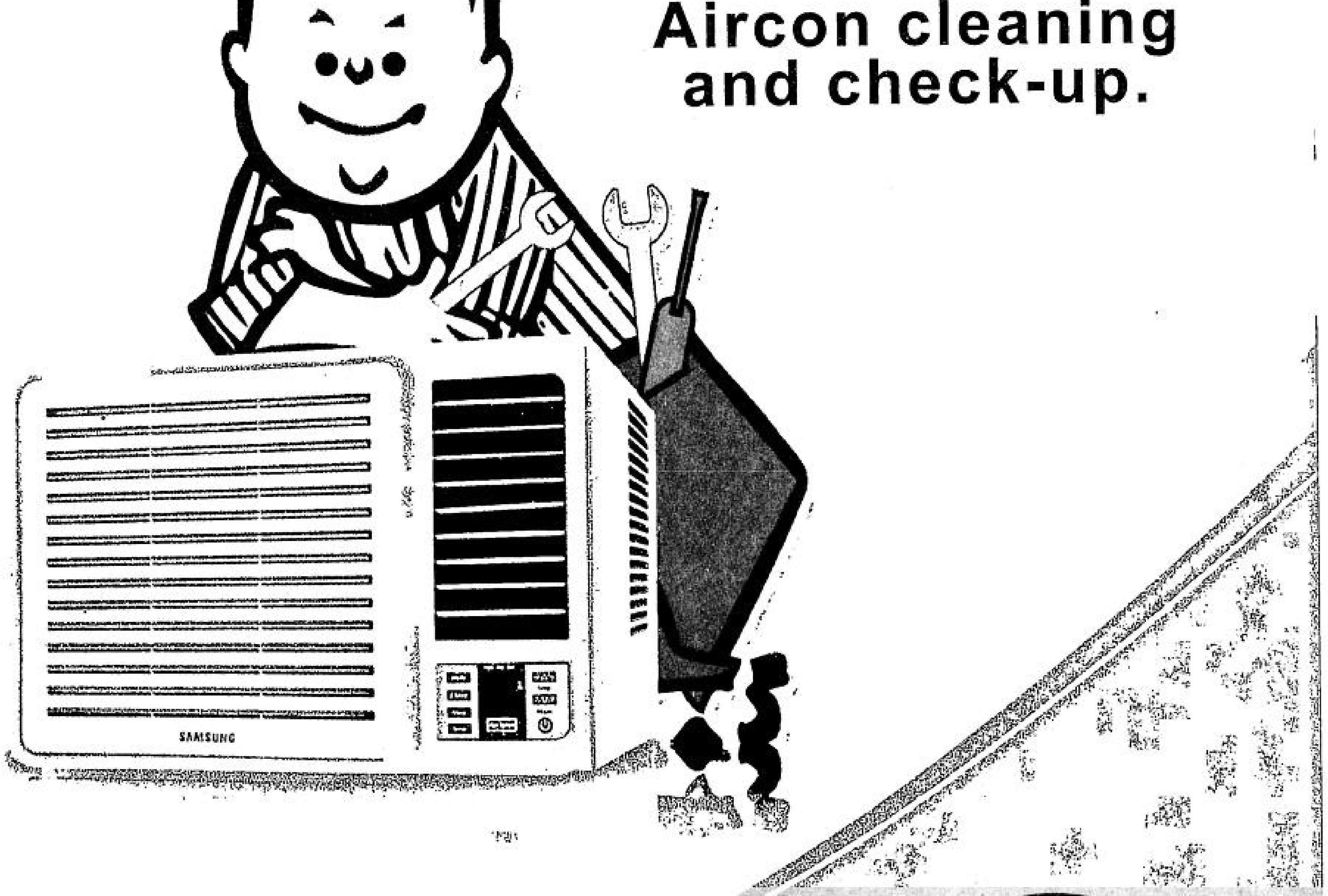

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Don't force your sons to enter priesthood

From page A1

priests even if there are only 7,406 of them left to tend to at least 73 million Filipino Catholics as of 2003, he told reporters.

"Christ would never allow His Church to run out of priests," he said.

Still, the situation underscores a crucial reality: Many Filipino priests did not want to become one; only their parents did.

Cruz said one of the "very fundamental" warnings to "pious parents" is to never push their son if it was not the latter who first expressed the wish to enter the seminary.

He noted that some parents would force their son to become a priest simply because they did not want to be embarrassed in a community that had such expectations.

What parents should know is that the "moral pressure" they exert will only make their son go "wayward," Cruz said.

Sometimes, it's better for parents to actually object to a son's desire to become a priest because this will test his resolve and may even inspire him to proceed with the calling, the archbishop said.

He cited his own experience: "In my case, my parents objected. My father did not talk to me for two years. My mother was visiting me surreptitiously. Maybe that's why I was able to [make it]—someone was objecting."

Starting a family

But parental pressure is not solely to blame for the decision of certain priests to quit, Cruz said.

Some of them want to start their own family, he said, adding that he usually tried to be of help as long as their cases were "meritorious."

For example, Cruz said, a priest wanting to marry would "really be helped by dispensation, by being able to live his married life for the good of the woman and the children."

"These are the ones that I really want to help—those who already have a family with children, and who want to receive the sacrament of matrimony," he said.

'Instructor delegate'

Cruz is an expert in canon law and an "instructor delegate," or one who handles the cases of priests wanting to quit. As such, he collects all the necessary documents for the Vatican's perusal.

A dispensation case usually takes two to three years to resolve, he said. Most of the 23 cases currently on his table were carried over from last year.

Fortunately for priests in anguish, by Cruz's own reckoning he has a "100-percent batting average."

How does a priest get dispensation?

Tough luck

"You have to prove that the person should not have been ordained a priest from the very beginning," Cruz said. "He should not have been ordained for many reasons—he was not totally for it, he did not take it seriously, or he was not emotionally fit for a priest's life and ministry."

But what if the Holy See rejects a priest's request for dispensation?

Tough luck. "Let the good Lord take care of him," Cruz said.

Surprise! Senate OKs national budget

From page A1

adoption of the budget bill to the House.

"Now that we have adopted the House version, we don't need a bicameral conference, and the President can now sign the budget," Sen. Manuel Villar, chair of the Senate finance committee, said.

20 affirmative votes

Opposition senators joined the Senate majority in delivering a unanimous 20 affirmative votes in favor of adopting the House version just a day after the President urged legislators, who were not passing the budget and the value-added tax bills, not to hold the nation hostage to petty politics.

The Senate earlier approved a national budget P240 million lower than the House version.

"The Senate today took the unprecedented and historic move of approving without any amendment House Bill No. 3154 or the [proposed] General Appropriations Act of 2005 by a vote of 20 affirmative votes, no negative votes and no abstention," Drilon said.

Absent senators

Only three senators—Miriam Santiago, Pia Cayetano and Jamby Madrigal—were absent when the chamber voted on the budget bill.

Drilon said the approved bill was the same as the one submitted by Ms Arroyo to Congress.

"The Senate feels that the continued uncertainty arising from the failure to enact a new budget is not doing the country any good," he said, adding that the country had been operating on a 2003-level budget.

"The budget is the financial roadmap of the country and a reenacted budget does not augur well for the country," Drilon said.

Drilon said the Senate move should not be seen as bowing to pressure from the President.

He said the administration and opposition senators merely set aside partisan interests to uphold the national good.

Villar said the adoption was in response to the President's call. "She called on us to speed up the passage of the budget and this is a response to her call as well as to the call of our people. We took heed of the people so that we can advance," he said.

Villar said he had broached the idea of adopting the House version to senators in the past weeks.

No pork for Lacson, Drilon, Lim

The Senate went into caucus early last night after Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile complained that nothing was happening to important bills.

The senators made the decision during the caucus and later voted unanimously to adopt the House version.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson asked the Senate to tell the President not to release the P240-million pork barrel allocated to him, Drilon and Sen. Alfredo Lim who all had decided to forego the pork barrel.

Drilon said this should reduce the yearend budget deficit by P360 million. The amount represents the total unreleased pork barrel of the three senators.

He said Sen. Juan Flavier also reiterated during the caucus his desire not to avail himself of half of his pork barrel.

Act of statesmanship

Opposition Sen. Edgardo Angara described the vote as an "act of statesmanship" for the country's stability.

"A reenacted budget in effect made the whole budget a big, big pork barrel because the projects and programs already funded under that budget would have been substantially completed, and the money would have been released as savings," he said after the vote.

"As you know savings can be reshuffled and re-aligned under the Constitution, and would have given the executive ... a huge pork barrel fund," he added.

Enrile said it was in the "primordial national interest" of Congress to pass a new budget.

"I think the people are entitled to some stability in the financial operations of the government. We can no longer take for granted our fiscal position and budgetary needs. We must show our people that we are a responsible Congress," he said.

Dangerous

Sen. Jinggoy Estrada said he voted for the adoption of the House version because a reenacted budget was "disastrous" for the nation.

"Reenacting the same budget for the third straight time is very dangerous. I don't want to be cowed by the House," Sen. Luisa "Loi" Ejercito said.

By agreeing to approve the budget, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said the senators had proven to Ms Arroyo that "we are committed to set our economic house in order.

"This is the first priority legislation that we need to pass over and above all the other tax measures that the President is now pushing this chamber to enact," he stressed.

Pimentel added: "This is an extraordinary act of the chamber in response to extraordinary demands of the times."

"This means that we have given the President, the chief executive officer of our country, the strength that she needs in order to address all these difficulties that we are encountering," Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr. said.

'Wise, old men'

"The Filipino people are crying out for results and the government is being called upon to produce results in the area of meaningful reforms," Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon said he wanted to vote against the measure but had to "bow to the collective wisdom of this chamber," saying that the senators were not called "wise, old men" for nothing.

"I do hope it will be understood that this is being taken because of a crisis situation," he said.

DRILON: Palace "pleasantly surprised" by the development.

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AYALA CENTER GLORIETTA • GREENBELT

‘Selective logging like haircuts for bald men’

From page A1

He identified such areas as the Caraga region and Davao.

Furniture makers worried

He said this would be enough to supply the local wood requirements, pegged at three million cubic meters a year.

But this policy direction does not sit well with the Chamber of Furniture Industries of the Philippines (CFIP).

More than the availability of wood for production, the group yesterday said it was worried that the proposed scheme would raise the transportation cost of raw materials and end products.

CFIP executive director Marlyn Siapno urged the DENR to carefully study all aspects of the plan, particularly the identification of the regions that would be open for logging.

"Will the transportation of products be facilitated by the government or hampered by this new scheme? Will we have a more difficult time in the production process?" Siapno said yesterday in a phone interview.

"They should really think this through," she said.

Giant leap

Zubiri suggested that the DENR allow logging in forest plantations, but not in natural-growth forests.

"Instead of implementing a logging policy with loopholes a logging truck can pass through, the DENR [should] observe the rule in sustainable tree-cutting—that trees planted by man you can cut, but trees planted by God you cannot," he said.

Nevertheless, the lawmaker lauded Defensor's decision to "tighten" logging operations.

He said this was a "giant leap" from the previous policy of allowing logging under "misleading euphemisms which at first sound good but whose unseen bottom line is that each allows the harvesting of trees."

He was apparently referring to timber licenses, including integrated forest management agreements (Ifmas), issued by the DENR.

Zubiri also said the task at hand was to subject Defensor's proposal to "review and scrutiny" in order to plug possible "loopholes" and to ensure that "the new program will not give a legal fig leaf to big loggers to resume their operations."

Shipping costs

But the furniture makers were more concerned about the possible increase in production costs as a result of the high cost of inter-island shipping of materials.

Siapno said it was cheaper to ship end products from Davao to Hong Kong than to Manila. She said shipping raw materials across the islands was even more expensive than transporting the end products.

She also pointed out that the CFIP's 500 members, mostly small- and medium-scale enterprises, were based in Luzon and might have difficulty acquiring wood from Mindanao because of the high transportation cost.

"We have always supported a selective log ban ... Sustainability is the source of our business ... But this should still be studied. What will happen to other regions in the country where there are mature trees for cutting?" Siapno said.

With the flash floods and landslides that killed and displaced more than 1,000 people in Quezon and Aurora late last year, President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered a total log ban nationwide.

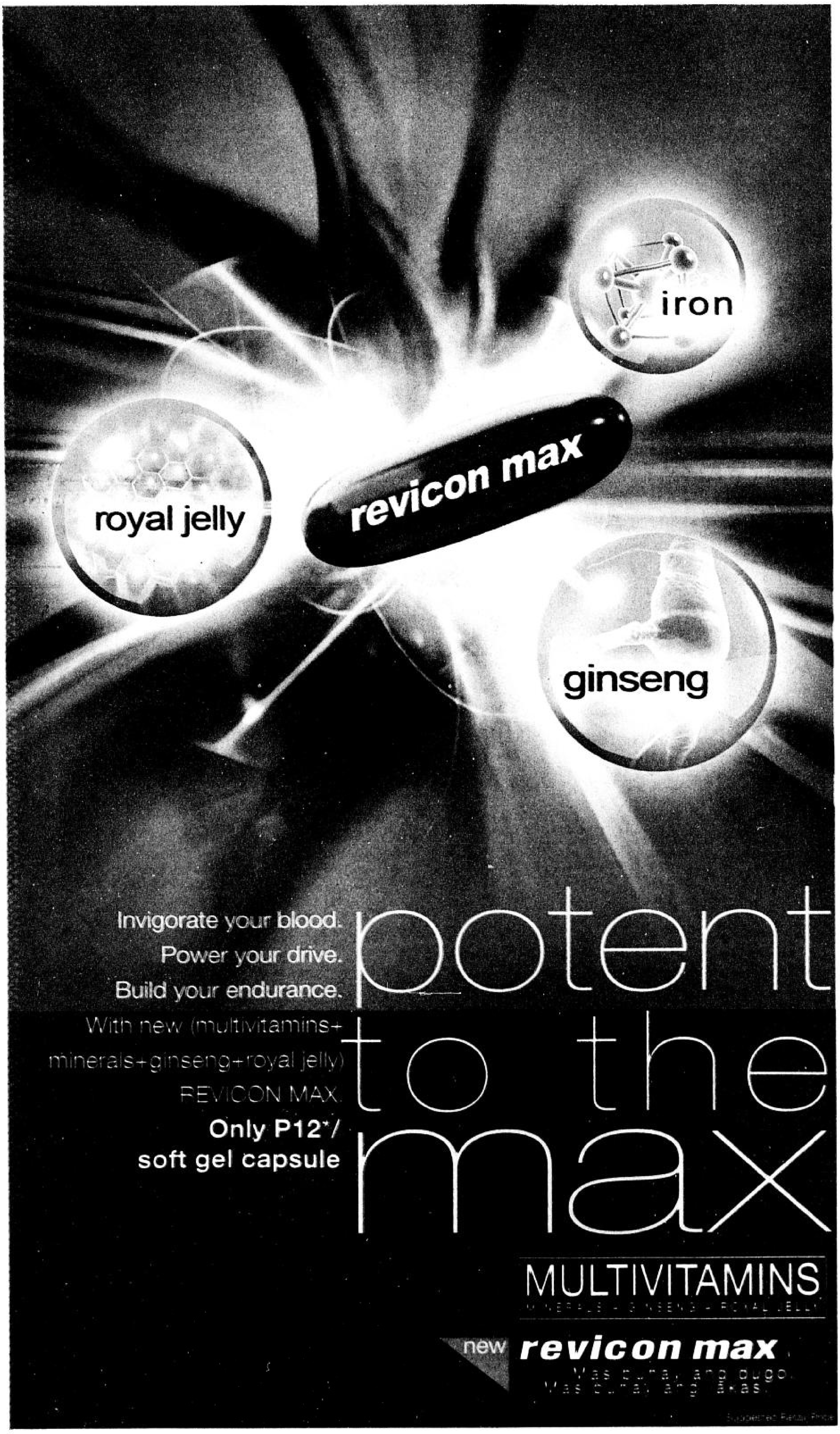
The ban has been in effect since last Dec. 8. Furniture makers said this had caused problems in the transportation of raw materials because deliveries were being stopped at checkpoints.

Improvement

Siapno said the proposed limited logging operations would be "an improvement" because it would allow "a flow of materials."

"But as to whether it is the best solution to our problem, I'm not sure..." she said, adding that the CFIP was willing to meet with the government on the matter.

The furniture industry brought in $294 million in export earnings last year, up 5 percent from 2003.



A PLEA from Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit dates back to 40 years ago.

‘Tell kids, parents about sex’

From page A1

"They do not know how pregnancy happens," even though some of them have had numerous children already, he said.

Climate of openness

"Sex should be talked about between parents and children," Dayrit said. "We want to create a culture where Filipinos actually talk about their sexuality and about their sexual health."

As it is, children would learn about sex quite late, and not from their parents. They would find out about it in school, from movies, peer groups, or worse by reading dirty magazines, he said.

What's needed is a "climate of openness" rooted in the barangay level where people "can talk about sex and their sexuality, about the number of children they want, and the methods they use to plan their families," he said.

Gifts from God

Quite a number of Filipinos were clueless about basic sexual reproduction, Dayrit said. He cited field studies by health workers which showed that many couples believed that children were gifts from God.

He attributed the Filipinos' naiveté about sex to conservatism in society.

"A lot of it is cultural because people don't talk about sex," he said, remarking that "knowledge is often tempered by values. And if the values are such that they will reject knowledge then there's nothing you can do," he added.

Talking about sex openly would help the government's "Ligtas Buntis" project, a P150-million population control program which the health secretary said was "premised on keeping mothers and children healthy."

Timing pregnancies

In many communities, Dayrit said many women didn't even know why they had menstrual periods or what the uterus was for. He said a good number of men were no better, completely ignorant of what happens when the sperm and egg unite.

He cited the example of a woman in Bulacan who decided not to have any more kids, yet continued to have unprotected sex.

"She doesn't understand completely how she can [get pregnant]," he said. If she knew about the process of ovulation then they could "time" their sexual activities and could avoid unwanted pregnancy, he added.

Building trust

Then there are mothers who still get pregnant even, say, after 10 children.

"The next pregnancy could be fatal," the health secretary said. "What will happen to the children if the mother dies? The family will suffer."

Dayrit said miseducation had long stalled government efforts to manage population.

The government promoted the use of contraceptives for 40 years, but officials encouraged only 30 percent of the population to use them, because the principle behind the campaign had yet to "seep into the culture," he explained.

"If you go to a household, you can't just force them to use contraceptives," Dayrit said.

"You have to engage them in a conversation, you have to build a relationship so they trust you. And it can't be just one visit. You have to keep coming back so you can identify the families who are at risk." *With a report from AFP*

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BRAVE HEART
Sophia Echavez receives the First Junior Fire Marshal medal for bravery from Sen. Manny Villar for helping bring her family, trapped in a burning building, to safe ground. The award was given by the Quezon City Fire Department. MITCH MAURICIO

Car theft gang victimizes banks, insurers, buyers

By Margaux C. Ortiz

IT'S LIKE hitting three birds with one stone.

The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) on Monday night stumbled upon what they described as a new modus operandi of a car theft syndicate that victimizes banks, insurance firms and prospective buyers.

An NBI agent said that with the new ploy, the syndicate stood to earn double the price of a "stolen" vehicle.

Two men identified as Erwin Tan, of Baler Street, Quezon City, and Dean Lloyd Go, of Tindalo Street, Tondo, Manila, were being questioned by the NBI in relation to the case.

Citing the claims of an informant, an NBI investigator who requested anonymity said members of the syndicate buy new and expensive vehicles using a bank loan. They then declare the vehicle as stolen.

However, what the syndicate allegedly actually does is that it tampers with the vehicle's chassis and serial numbers so it could be resold in the Visayas or Mindanao.

Meanwhile, the syndicate makes a fraudulent insurance claim.

According to an NBI investigator, Tan allegedly bought two sports utility vehicles (SUVs), a Toyota Prado and a Mitsubishi Adventure, through a bank loan a few days ago.

The NBI said Tan and Go were stopped by NBI agents at Pier 12 of the North Harbor at about 9 p.m. Monday.

But Go denied that he or Tan were involved in any syndicate.

Go said he was just accompanying Tan and that they were having coffee at a Starbucks outlet at the Blue Wave on Diosdado Macapagal Avenue in Pasay City at about 9 p.m. when NBI agents took them into custody.

He added that he was surprised to hear later that they were being linked to a car theft syndicate.

Eusebio asks traders not to pay taxes, yet

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

TORN between two local governments?

Better not pay taxes in the meantime, Pasig City Mayor Vicente Eusebio told confused stall owners at the contested Sta. Lucia mall property.

The mall is the subject of a dispute between the governments of Pasig City and Cainta, Rizal.

"I suggest for them not to pay yet until a final decision is reached. Let us just wait and see," Eusebio told the INQUIRER yesterday.

On the other hand, Cainta Mayor Mon Ilagan is asking stall owners to continue paying taxes to Cainta.

Not the solution

"That is not the solution to the problem" said Ilagan. "I appeal to stall owners to continue paying taxes to Cainta."

Both local governments have set up collection booths in the mall, confusing stall owners.

Earlier, Pasig City won a tax collection case against Sta. Lucia. Cainta filed an appeal but it was rejected by the Court of Appeals.

Cainta then filed a motion to quash the writ of execution which the Pasig City Regional Trial Court had handed down.

And while the motion to quash is being heard, the court also gave a status quo order last week.

But even the interpretation of the order is being debated by the two local governments.

Cainta's plea

Ilagan said the stall owners should continue paying to Cainta like what they had been doing before the case.

But Pasig City legal officer Carlos Abesamis said that because the court had already released a writ of execution, the status quo order meant that the property should be considered to be within Pasig City.

"We are not after the money. We want to safeguard our people so we are advising them not to pay yet," Eusebio said.

Should it be decided, finally, that the property is within Pasig City, the mall owners would not have to pay any penalty, he explained.

Bomb crash course for traffic aides

By Tarra V. Quismundo

TO HELP boost the government's campaign against terrorism, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) will train traffic aides in bomb detection and identification to be handled by explosives experts.

Key cities in the country were recently rocked with bomb blasts that killed eight people and injured 150 others.

Some 1,800 MMDA traffic aides are set to undergo the training soon according to Angelito Vergel de Dios, MMDA Traffic Operations Center Executive Director.

What to look for

"The training program is designed to show traffic aides what they should look for.

"They cannot identify explosives if they don't know what they look like," he told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Vergel de Dios said MMDA traffic aides, posted all over Metro Manila's main thoroughfares, would go through a crash course on bomb identification, as part of the agency's efforts to help in the antiterror campaign in Metro Manila.

Previous incidents

"For instance, they would be taught what a C4 or TNT looks like," said the traffic chief, referring to explosives that had been used in previous terror attacks all over the country, including the recent Valentine's Day bombings.

The triple attacks occurred in the cities of Makati, General Santos and Davao.

Since then, security monitoring systems all over the country had been heightened, with the police and the military on red alert.

Identification

"They [traffic aides] man the streets more than eight hours a day together with the policemen on duty.

"I'm very sure they could easily identify suspicious-looking persons involved in terrorist activities," MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando said in a statement.

Once equipped with the basics of bomb identification, the traffic aides are expected to report sightings of suspicious packages where they are posted.

In case they find suspicious-looking packages, Vergel de Dios said the MMDA men would immediately coordinate response activities with the police.

Facilitators

MMDA traffic aides had gone through an explosives identification training in 2002, shortly after a Golden Harvest bus exploded in Balintawak, Quezon City, in October.

Vergel de Dios said the MMDA has yet to finalize which agency to tap as facilitators of the explosives crash course.

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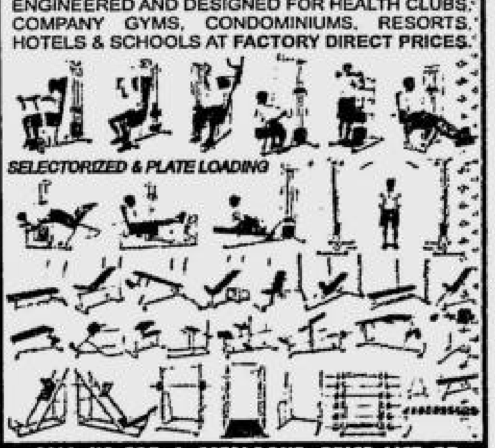

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QC dads target 'balut' vendors

By DJ Yap

BEFORE he gets a chance to make a sales pitch in that all too familiar call, ask your friendly neighborhood 'balut' (duck egg) vendor his police clearance first.

In a bid to stamp out nighttime crime in Quezon City, councilors are "strongly requesting" vendors who work nights to carry their certificates of police clearance with them.

Principal author Restituto Malañgen and 16 other city councilors proposed the scheme, noting that crime incidence is high during the night.

"If a 'balut' vendor has his police clearance certificate with him, police will know he's not just pretending to be a vendor while casing the neighborhood for prospective victims," a legislative officer of Malañgen said.

A vendor selling green mangoes in Philcoa, Quezon City, said getting a police clearance would not make much of a difference.

Leonila Oga-oga, 55, said a vendor is required to get a barangay clearance and other clearance forms from City Hall anyway.

'Dodong' bids adieu, but promises to be back

By Tarra V. Quismundo

HE MIGHT have said goodbye, but he promised not to fade away.

After stepping down from the helm of the country's premier university, former University of the Philippines president Francisco "Dodong" Nemenzo said he would still be around, doing what he can for his country.

"If we, as a people, lose faith in our own capacity to create a better future, we can never transcend the current mess. It is time to think of an alternative program, but a feasible one around which people can rally," said Nemenzo in his farewell speech to the UP community.

Nemenzo retired as university president on Feb. 9, his 70th birthday, after five years of heading the UP system.

Once a leading member of the defunct Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas, the man who had spent what seemed like a lifetime in the academe, was a political science professor for 42 years, and had assumed various administrative posts in the state university.

"I plan to bring together the best brains in UP and in the progressive movement to craft a Blueprint for Feasible Alternatives," he said.

"I am in a better position to organize a think tank now that I am no longer saddled with administrative responsibilities," said Nemenzo in his speech.

Nemenzo had given UP such a road map, a program he called the Five-Year Plan. Following his own map, Nemenzo implemented programs to help UP truly live up to its reputation of being one of the country's best.

Under his administration, Nemenzo modernized UP laboratories and libraries, upgraded degree programs, improved facilities, sent faculty members abroad, and boosted their published faculty research.

Even if the father of three has retired, it seems there would be no let-up in his continuing quest for excellence. "What the country is looking for right now is a comprehensive and well-prepared program that would lead us to where we should go and what we should do," he said.

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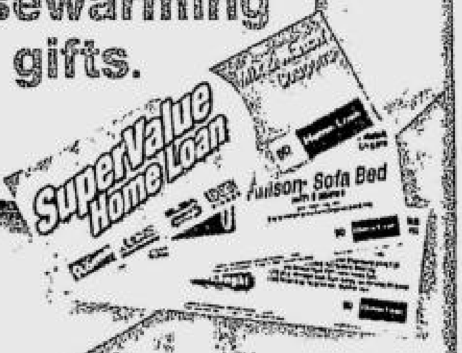

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Editor **Teddyvic S. Melendres**

SPORTS TV

Compiled by L. Mangulat

GOLF: LPGA SBS Open; 5:30 p.m.; ESPN - Catch J-Ro as she continues to hold the lead in the second round.

BASKETBALL: US NCAA - Big Ten Wildcard Game; 10 a.m.; Pittsburgh vs Boston College; 3:30 p.m. (r); Oklahoma vs Texas; 5:30 p.m. (r); ESPN - Catch the college hard court battles before the NCAA Tournament.

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Chot cuts nat'l pool to just 21

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE LIST just got leaner. But national team coach Chot Reyes stressed that his search for 12 talented and dedicated players is far from over.

From the 42 players invited to the Philippine team, Reyes yesterday trimmed the lineup to 20 standouts from the Philippine Basketball Association and chipped in one player from the amateur ranks.

"This is no means the final list," said Reyes. "Those who were named can still play their way out of the pool and those who did not get in can still make their way back in the team."

Leading the elite cast is Barangay Ginebra's Eric Menk, who won the Best Player of the Conference and Finals Most Valuable Player award in the PBA Philippine Cup.

The only amateur who made it to the list was Philippine Basketball League revelation Anthony Washington.

The rest were the superstars of the PBA, including certified scorers Danny Seigle of San Miguel, Renren Ritualo of FedEx, Mark Caguioa of Barangay Ginebra and Tony de la Cruz of Shell.

Prized guards Jimmy Alapag of Talk 'N Text, Mike Cortez of Alaska, Dondon Hontiveros of San Miguel and James Yap of Purefoods made it in the short list, along with top big men Nic Belasco and Dorian Peña of San Miguel, Rommel Adducul of Barangay Ginebra and Enrico Villanueva of Red Bull.

Also selected were Purefoods' Kerby Raymundo, Talk 'N Text's Yancy de Ocampo, and Alaska's Sonny Thoss.

Talk 'N Text's Willie Miller, Barangay Ginebra's Jayjay Helterbrand, Coca-Cola's Rafi Reavis and Sta. Lucia's Dennis Espino, the oldest player at 31, were named as injured reserves.

"These are the most deserving injured players," he said. "These players were injured in the line of duty. So it's not their fault, we cannot take it against them."

Helterbrand injured his right calf in Game 5 of the semifinals, while Miller sprained a foot in Game 2 of the finals.

Espino and Reavis, meanwhile, have been suffering from recurring injuries.

Reyes added that there were several other players who "showed everything we're looking for" such as John Arigo, Don Allado, Mark Telan, Noy Castillo and Rich Alvarez. But he had to painstakingly narrow the list to those "who have a legitimate chance of making it in the final 12."

Reyes said that his main criteria was the players' "ability to work together and complement each other" and "the ability to play within the system we envisioned for the team."

The 41-year-old tactician added that a player's attitude was another telling factor.

"As PBA players, it already presupposes that they're all very good," said Reyes. "So during the national team's practices, we looked at the intangibles—the players' reaction when they get hammered, who comes early, who stays behind, who's communicative with the coaching staff."

The national squad, which will see action in the Asian Basketball Confederation (ABC) Championship in Qatar this September, has an average height of 6-foot-3 and a median age of 26.

Reyes conferred the lineup with former RP-Asian Games coaches Norman Black, Tim Cone and Jong Uichico, and deputies Aboy Castro and Binky Favis.

PHONE PALS
11

MILLER: Part of injured reserve list

US editors favor Erik over Manny

Morales: Most important fight

By Salven L. Lagumbay,
Contributor

MORALES

IN a startling twist, a survey conducted among more than 100 boxing editors in the United States and Puerto Rico indicated an Erik Morales win over Manny Pacquiao in their monumental March 19 showdown in Las Vegas.

Morales, 28, and former world champ in three divisions, has been pegged the underdog in the Las Vegas booking lines since the fight announcement in January.

The development lends credence to the prediction that odds would be even come fight time at the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino.

In fact, the vote among the editors was close with 54 choosing the Mexican and only 51 siding with Pacquiao.

One editor said it will be a draw.

Meanwhile, Morales has described his bout with Pacquiao, 26, as his "most important fight."

"Pacquiao is a soldier and I wait for a very difficult, exciting combat," Morales told the Mexican media from his training camp at the Otomi Mountains in Mexico. " This is a fight to be remembered by fans."

Morales said he intends to make the fight a showcase of his talents and not that of his opponent.

Explained Morales: "Pacquiao is a warrior and a very good fighter... he's always going forward, applying pressure... throwing fast punches... I think his speed is his greatest quality but like every fighter he's got weaknesses and I have to take advantage of those weaknesses."

"This fight will decide what my career will be and I feel like I still have a lot left," he added.

Morales also divulged his strategy: "We are going to have to control the rate of the fight and to make an intelligent fight. We know that he is strong and if there is a need to box we will do it, but if there is a need to exchange blows, we will also do it."

Interestingly, Morales has not predicted a knockout in five years, citing that he is just working with much concentration and focus for this bout, as he fully knows the significance of the March 19 showdown

"All fights are important, but there is no doubt that this one is much more important than all others, " he said.

Asi's slot leans on PBA board

By Jasmine W. Payo

NATIONAL coach Chot Reyes will find room for the beleaguered Asi Taulava in the Philippine team.

"It's a matter for the PBA board to decide. But if the PBA allows him to play, he will be in the national team," said Reyes.

The 6-foot-9 cager was suspended by the league based on a Department of Justice ruling that he faked his citizenship.

Eleven other foreign-born Filipino players made it to the 21-man roster of the men's national team that will compete in the Asian Basketball Confederation (ABC) Championship in Qatar this September.

Leading the lineup is PBA Most Valuable Player Eric Menk, along with Jimmy Alapag, Danny Seigle, Mark Caguioa, Jayjay Helterbrand, Nic Belasco, Dorian Peña, Rafi Reavis, Mike Cortez, Sonny Thoss and amateur standout Anthony Washington.

"The guideline is very simple. If you cannot play in the PBA, you cannot be in the pool," said Reyes. "So if there is someone who is not able to complete his papers and cannot play in the league, then he cannot play in the pool."

"Same goes with Washington," added Reyes. "Before he applies for the PBA draft, he must comply and complete all his requirements. If he's not able to do that, he's going to come off the list."

The PBA is now requiring foreign-born Filipino players to submit additional citizenship papers to be able to play in the PBA's Reinforced Conference.

The deadline of submission has been moved from March 4 to April 20.

Enrico welcomes RP five challenge

By Dennis U. Eroa

ENRICO Villanueva, who plays for Red Bull Barako, cemented his place among the league's list of elite players as he survived the rigorous 10-day national team workouts under the close watch of head coach Chot Reyes.

Known as the Raging Bull of Philippine basketball, the 6-foot-5 Villanueva joined five other big men in the survivors list.

Villanueva, 24, was lifting weights at the Gold's Gym in Glorietta, Makati City, when he learned of Reyes' announcement.

"I promise to work harder. I welcome this challenge," said Villanueva.

The last time Villanueva donned the nationals colors was during the ABC under-18 championships in Calcutta, India.

A former UAAP MVP, Villanueva excels with his take-no-prisoner stance.

"Players are getting stronger and stronger. I need to stay in excellent shape in order to endure the banging," Villanueva said.

Red Bull made an early exit in the recent Gran Matador PBA Philippine Cup, where Villanueva averaged 17.5 points and 9.4 rebounds.

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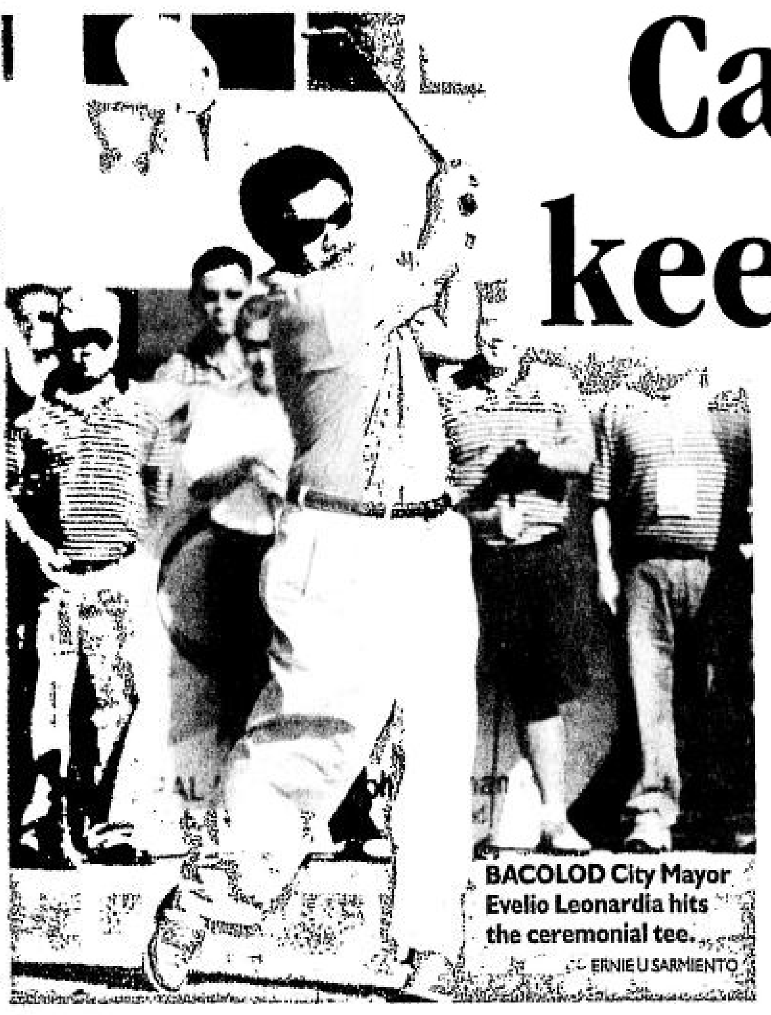
Canlubang, Southwoods keep starting units secret



BACOLOD City Mayor Evelio Leonardia hits the ceremonial tee. ERNIE U SARMIENTO

By Musong R. Castillo

MURCIA, Negros Occidental—Canlubang and Southwoods are playing their cards close to their chest, though it's obvious that they have the best hands in this edition of the Philippine Airlines Interclub.

Both squads refused to divulge the names of the players that will open their respective bids in the Championship Division of men's play, with the bluffing to end only when the first tee shot is hit today.

The Sugar Barons and Southwoods bets practiced at the Marapara over in Bacolod, even if the first round is scheduled at the Binitin layout here, just to avoid giving each other a hint of their starting lineups.

"All I can say is that we will be fielding a strong team (for Day 1)," said Canlubang non-playing captain Luigi Yulo. "I'm juggling combinations in my mind. But we want to open up strong and start (our bid) right."

Del Monte is the defending champion, but with no homecourt advantage to speak of, the Bukidnon-based squad is hardly drawing attention.

"It will boil down to Southwoods and Canlubang for the title," said Southwoods' Jeric Hechanova, seated just a few feet across Yulo. "Our lineups are pretty much even."

Del Monte captain Yoyong Velez, on the other hand, does not mind. He's feeling pressure-free, as a matter of fact, and gave out his lineup for today consisting of Lino Retuerto, Buboy Jaraulla, Joel Opaco, Ondoy Mondilla and Jett Plete.

"We have proved (last year) that we can win it," Velez said. "These courses are very similar to Del Monte, though Binitin is the harder of the two."

Ben and Paul Minoza, Tristan Tabanas, Louie Dacudao and Velez see action Thursday at Marapara.

Tournament format calls for each team to field five players for two days or 36 holes in different venues as much as possible. The committee disqualifies a player in the individual championship for playing in only one venue.

And Yulo could very well ask Juvic Pagunsan to sacrifice his individual aspirations again and play two days in Binitin which Juvic knows like the back of his hands.

Pagunsan, the country's amateur ace, was a former bag-toter at the par-70 layout. He played twice there in 2002, when Canlubang won the third of four straight titles that started at the turn of the century.

Hechanova feels that Canlubang will ask JR Tanpinco to play two rounds at the Marapara. The former jungolf standout knows every bump on every fairway of the Golem Silverio-designed layout as he learned to play the game there.

Welcoat, Benilde unite for PBL

By Jasmine W. Payo

THEY already have the experience, size and depth.

But the Welcoat Paintmasters, runners-up in the Philippine Basketball League Open Championship, decided to boost their lineup with young talents from the De La Salle-College of St. Benilde.

"This is a good situation for both parties," said Welcoat team owner Raymund Yu after signing an agreement with DLS-CSB school officials led by president Bro. Armin Luistro on Monday night that will allow CSB players to beef up the squad.

"Welcoat will toughen up the Benilde players for the NCAA, while Benilde will provide us a steady supply of young players."

Welcoat mentor Caloy Garcia also replaced Tonichi Yturri as head coach of the Blazers.

The two-year partnership made Welcoat the fifth ballclub to adopt a collegiate team after Magnolia-Far Eastern University, ICTSI-La Salle, Addict Mobile-Ateneo and Toyota Otis-Letran.

"Initially, there will be five Benilde players in our roster," added Yu. "The following season, at least half will be from Benilde."

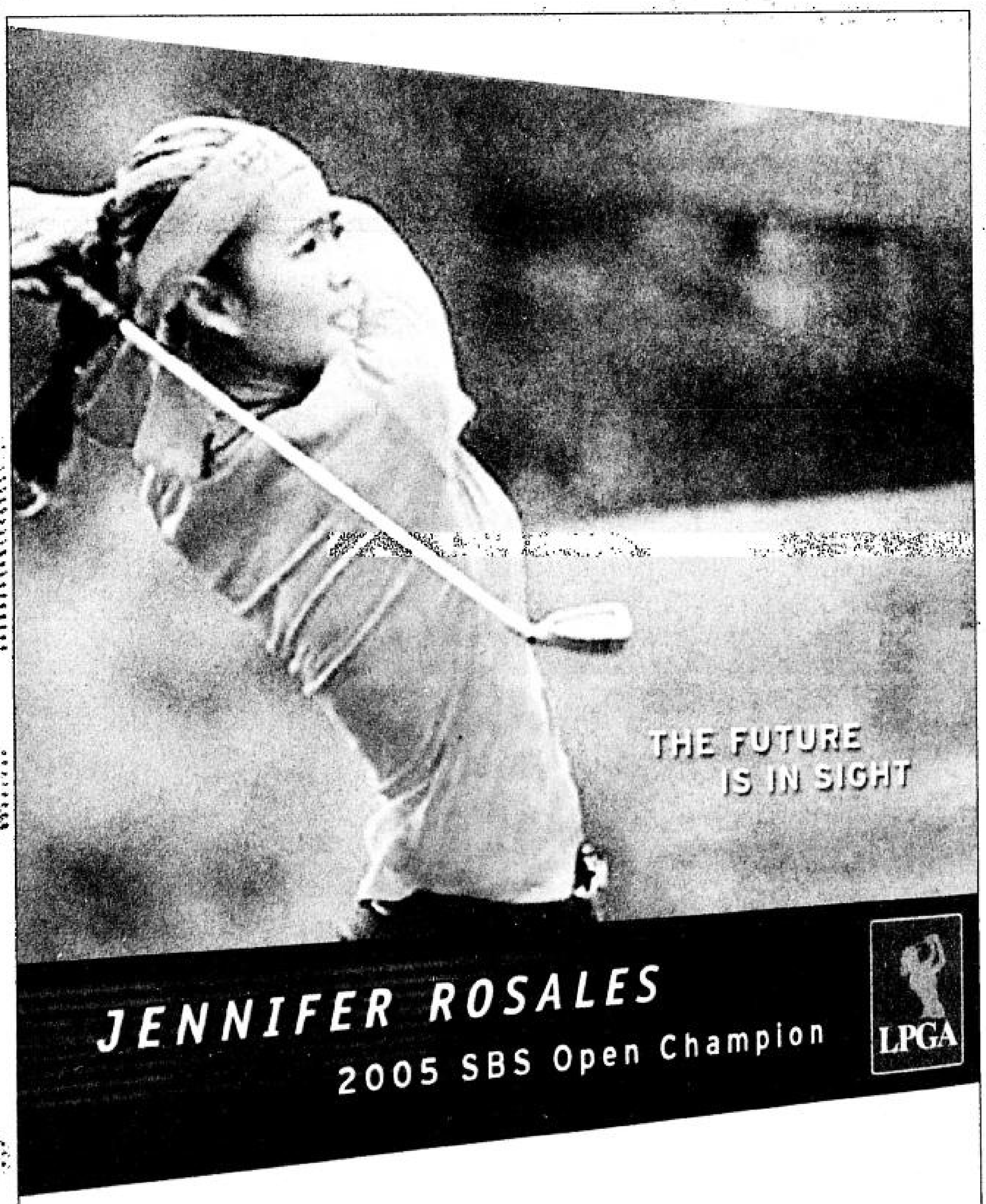
Garcia named Blazers center Jay Sagad, point guard Paolo Orbeta and forward Carlo Manding as his top picks.

"We wanted to change the pace of the team. We'd rather run now," said Garcia, who also suited up for the Blazers from 1995 to 1999.

The Paintmasters will still lean on Fantastic Freshman awardee Anthony Washington, JR Reyes, Eugene Tan and Ryan Dy when the PBL Unity Cup kicks off on April 2.

Welcoat, one of the dominant teams in the league, already won five titles in 10 championship appearances.

PEP RALLY: First Gentleman Mike Arroyo and San Miguel president Ramon Ang join the national athletes the food and beverage conglomerate will back for the Southeast Asian Games. San Miguel will play godfather to 14 different sports associations. VAL HANDUMON



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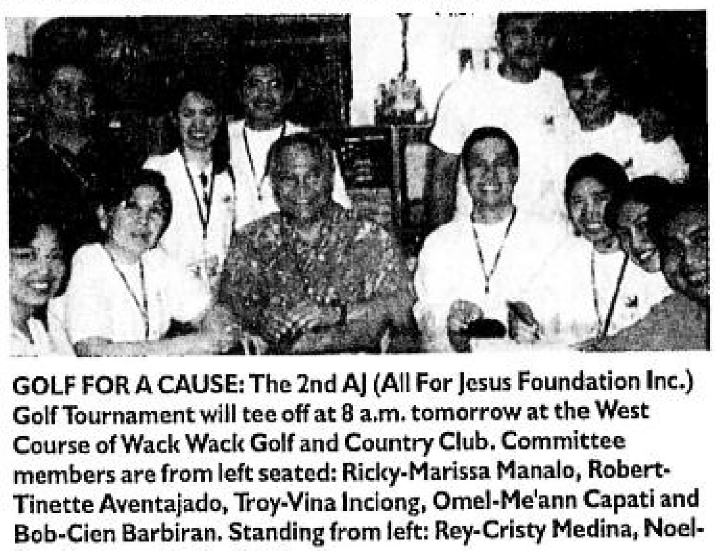
SPORTSWATCH

Nadera paces Palawan chess

INTERNATIONAL Master Barlo Nadera beat National Master Darwin Laylo after 70 moves of a Gruenfeld Defense to score his fifth straight win in the 2005 Palawan Open Chess championship yesterday at the Puerto Princesa Coliseum in Puerto Princesa City. Nadera also bested Rodolfo Panopio Jr. and top seed GM-candidate Ronald Dableo in round 3 and round 4 to keep the solo lead. NM Rustom Tolentino inflicted Dableo his second loss after 35 moves of Caro-Kann Defense and remained at second with 4.5 points. Tolentino also won over second seed IM Richard Bitoon in the third round. Bitoon bounced back in contention with victories over Edmundo Daluddung and NM Jeffrey Nool to lead the group of 4.0 pointers along with Panopio, Fide Master Jesse Noel Sales, NM Roland Nolte and NM Mirabeau Maga. *Marlon Bernardino*

Largahan 5-cock elims continue

ANOTHER big crowd is expected at Roligon Mega Cockpit today when the third-round eliminations of "Largahan 5-Cock Derby" get under way at 4 p.m. The four-day event being hosted by Roligon owner Rolly Ligon stakes a guaranteed prize of P1.5 million. The fastest kill champion will drive home an imported Toyota 4 x 4 Surf. After two days of fierce competition, 35 participants qualified for the championship round on Friday after posting two wins each. The qualifiers include Rep. Ronnie Puno, Rey Uy, Capt. Ben Rodriguez, Erwin Maligaya, Tiling Capitan, Erwin Diamante, Randy Rondilla, Charlie Espiritue, Tos Reyes, lawyer Carlos, Tony Galang, Capt. Maganito, Alex Magpantay and Eman Pendona. The next derby at Roligon unfolds on March 12 via the "Filcobra 4-Cock Derby." Derby hosts are Jerry Ang, Peter Uren, Jimmy Machuca and Dado Mitra. At stake is P300,000 for an entry fee of P7,700. For inquiries, call 833-2275, 833-1638 and 852-9812.



GOLF FOR A CAUSE: The 2nd AJ (All For Jesus Foundation Inc.) Golf Tournament will tee off at 8 a.m. tomorrow at the West Course of Wack Wack Golf and Country Club. Committee members are from left seated: Ricky-Marissa Manalo, Robert-Tinette Aventajado, Troy-Vina Inciong, Omel-Me'ann Capati and Bob-Cien Barbiran. Standing from left: Rey-Cristy Medina, Noel-Jina Deyto and Relly-Tet Santos.

Archers cop 2nd

BANGKOK—Filipino archers capped their spectacular showing in the 2005 1st Asian Grand Prix last Sunday by taking the women's team gold medal and the men's team bronze in the compound division at the Huamark field here.

Led by triple gold winner Amaya Paz, the Filipinos crushed India, 247 to 234, to cop their fifth gold medal in the tourney. The other RP archers were Jennifer Chan and Joann Tabanag.

The men's team of Raul Arambulo, Adam Jimenez III, Christian Guiller Obmerga and Rizal Ledesma whipped Hong Kong, 240-219, to settle for the bronze.

The RP squad, which was sponsored by San Miguel Corp., PSC and the FG Foundation, finished second overall with five golds, one silver and two bronzes.

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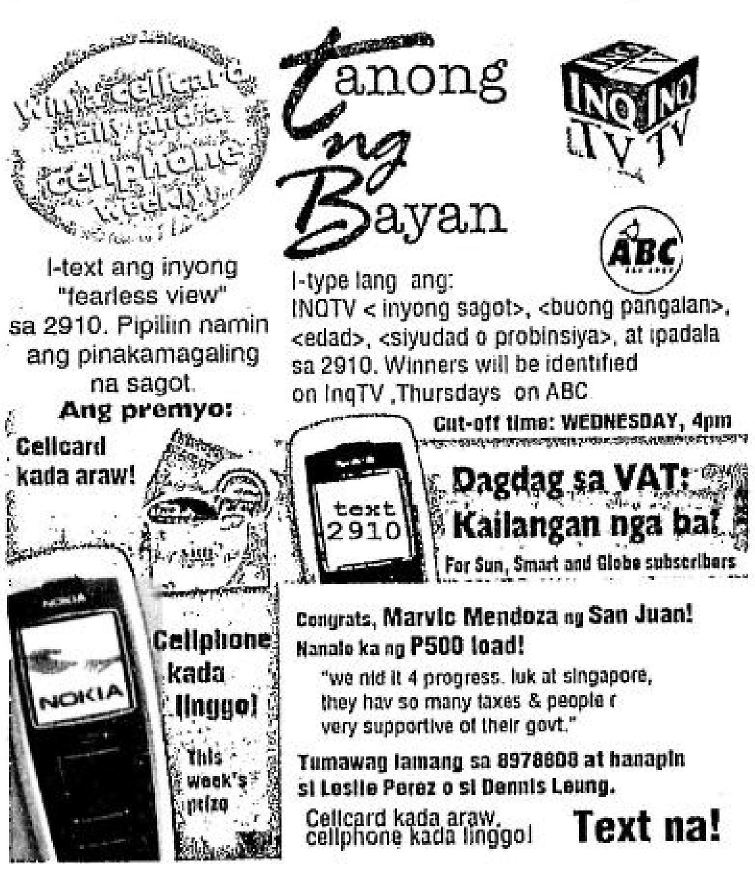
Race 3--1. Carnegie Hall 2 Wind Storm 3. Sound Value 4. Reason to Believe
Race 4--1. Plaridel Hero 2 Magpakailanman 3 Wind Runner 4. Hello Peter
Race 5--1. Tenacity 2. Words of Joy 3. Pivotal 4. Dancing Slew 5. Windy City
Race 6--1. Hector's Dream 2. Caballero 3. Master Kenneth 4. Strong Element
Race 7--1. Red Bells 2. Extreme Illusion 3. Silver Cho Cho 4. Honoree/Pirouette 5. Shaolin
Race 8--1. Fancy Dancer 2 Rebound 3. Lumiere 4. Skip Away/Sham Sham 5. Bashful Lady 6. El Cid



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Tigers rebound; Admirals win anew

By Marc Anthony Reyes

DUMAGUETE CITY (via Cruznet)—University of Santo Tomas finally broke into the win column with a hard-earned 82-73 victory over University of Perpetual Help-Jonalta System-Laguna yesterday even as other Metro Manila bets thrived in the National Students basketball championships here.

UST banked on Jojo Duncil to even their card at 1-1 in seniors Group A. Duncil fired 13 points despite a recent bout with fever.

Southern City College-Zamboanga beat UST last Sunday.

Defending champion Philippine Maritime Institute and NCR elimination champ UPH-Dalta System, swept their way to the quarterfinals with identical 3-0 records in Group C and B, respectively.

PMI rolled over University of Northeast Philippines, 74-44, at the Bayawan City Gym some 110 kilometers from here, while UPH-Dalta broke the hearts of the hometown crowd at the Lamberto Macias Gym after downing Foundation University, 60-52.

Guest team National University posted a 2-0 card in Group D, while Bohol Institute of Technology is at 2-1 in Group D. Both teams were to play the last game late last night.

"It's very hard to win here. But we are expecting it because we don't have the same lineup we had in the NCR elims," said UST coach Nel Parado, who fielded the Tigers' Team B players here except for Duncil, Allan Evangelista, Chester Taylor and June Dizon.

The UAAP veterans, according to Parado, were not allowed to play to catch up on their studies.

Silliman University plucked its second straight win at the expense of Southern City College-Zamboanga, 74-69, even as University of Baguio nipped Angeles University Foundation, 86-79, and West Negros College-Bacolod thrashed Acsat-Dumaguete, 96-70.

RP begins volley bid vs Macau

Games Today (*USC Gym*)
3:00 p.m.—Opening Ceremonies
5:00 p.m.—Philippines vs Macau
7:00 p.m.—Tonga vs Indonesia

CEBU CITY—Host Philippines is confident enough not to worry too much about its opening match today in the 2006 FIVB World Men's Championship First Round Tournament Pool Asia-C at the University of San Carlos gymnasium here.

But its 5 p.m. foe, Macau, has sounded off a warning it better heed.

RP head coach Vip Isada said he is less worried over Macau, which hasn't advanced past the first round even in its best performance in this quadrennial meet. Still, he cautioned the team to play hard .

And besides, Macau had a little something to say about its participation here.

"We wouldn't be here if we can't give strong competition," said Macau coach Leong Veng Teng.

The Philippine starters are Herminio Gallo Jr., Cesael de los Santos, Gino Macailan, Avelino Tongco, Edcer Penetrante and Benianmor Lingat. Other members are Ariel de la Cruz, Janley Patrona, Dante Alinsumurin, Jerrico Hubalde, Willy de la Cruz and Jeffrey John San Jose.

Featured in the 7 p.m. match are Tonga, playing in its first-ever international tournament, and reigning Southeast Asian Games champion Indonesia.

Philippine Volleyball Federation president Roger Banzuela said the Philippines will face tough competition from Chinese-Taipei, which currently ranks No. 36 in the world, and Indonesia.

Kobe netters nip La Salle

KOBE Gakuin University found the La Salle tennis team a tough nut to crack in singles competition, but flexed enough muscles in the doubles to emerge victorious at the close of the Prince Inter-College Tennis Dual Meet on Sunday at the PCA courts in Plaza Dilao, Paco.

Yannic Guba beat Naoki Miyake, 6-2, 6-2; Edu Diez outlasted Masaki Kawatsu, 7-6 (4), 1-6, 0-3 (ret.); and Ralph Barte walloped Takashi Higashiguchi, 6-2, 6-0, to give the Green Archers three of the nine scheduled matches in this event sponsored by Prince.

But Kobe Gakuin, the Japan Division II champion, scored behind Fuyuki Ogawa who survived Irwin de Guzman, 1-6, 6-3, 6-2, Shimpei Moriguchi who defeated Pereme Alina, 6-1, 4-6, 6-3; and Shohei Maruyama who beat Mark Balce, 6-4, 6-3.

The Japanese also dominated the doubles with Ogawa-Miyake beating Alina-Diez, 7-5, 6-2; Higashiguchi-Kawatsu over Chase Tinio-De Guzman, 4-6, 6-1, 7-5; and Maruyama-Moriguchi over Barte-Balce, 6-3, 6-2.

"We'll be coming back to Japan successful, and satisfied that we've learned a lot playing a talented La Salle squad, " said Camoy Palahang, former RP Davis Cupper and coach of Kobe Gakuin U for three years now.

Tanauan tilt up

CORONA

THE 1ST Tanauan Chess Open-Mayor's Cup, the country's biggest active chess tournament ever, kicks off at 9 a.m. Friday at the Speaker Jose Laurel Memorial Gymnasium (Gym 2, back of City-Hall) in Tanauan City, Batangas.

The two-day event offers a cash pot of P200,000, with the champion receiving P100,000 plus trophy. The second placer gets P40,000; third, P20,000; fourth, P10,000; fifth, P5,000; 6th-10th, P2,000 each; and 11th-20th, P1,000 each. "We are getting closer to the clash of the best chess minds of the country. We want the players and visitors to experience the hospitality of our city," said Tanauan City Mayor Alfredo Corona.

For details, call (043) 778-0656 and 778-1529 loc 106 (Daniel Darusin) or ACCA (Susan Manalo), 0917-4803674 and 0918-6966581.

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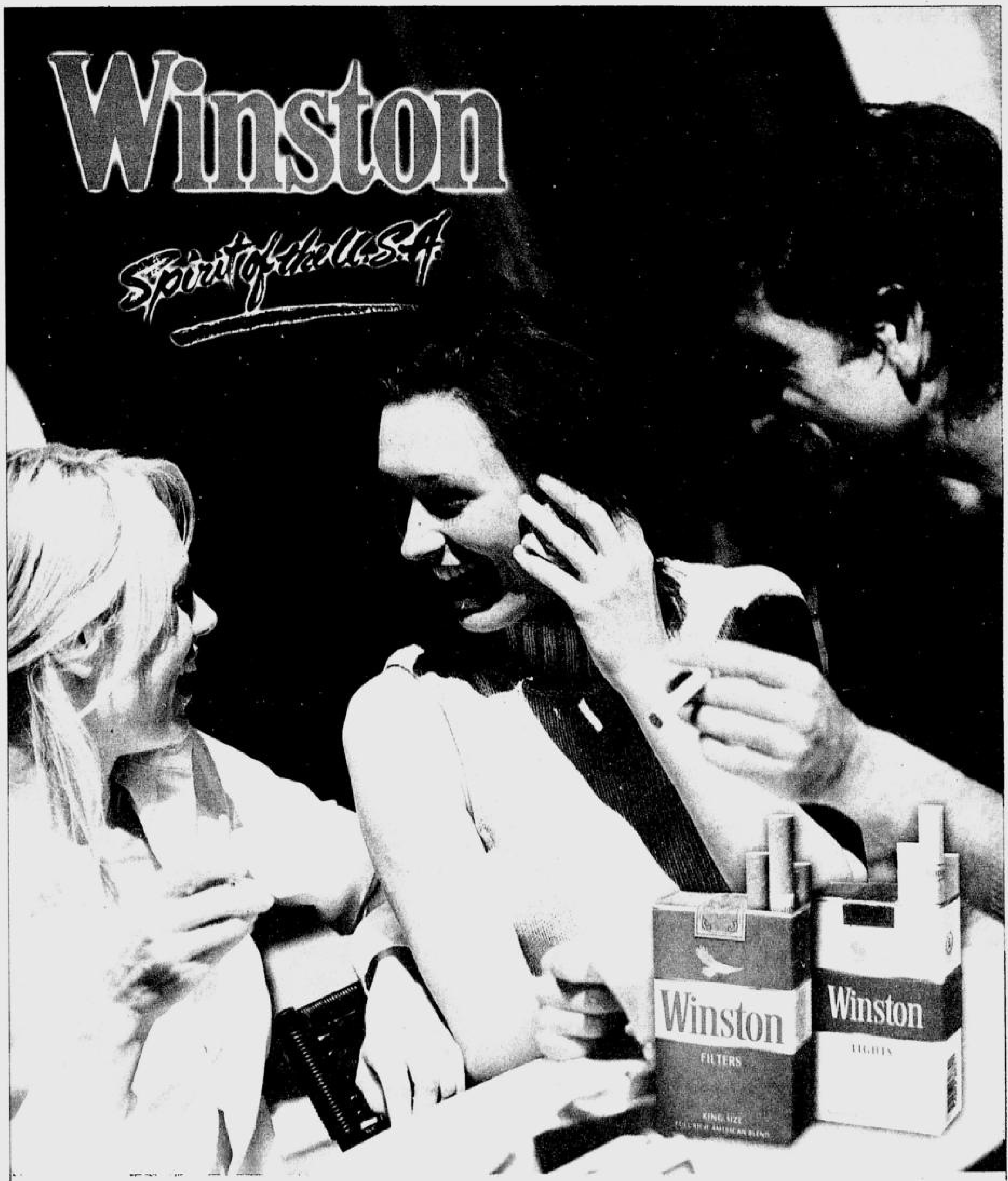

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WEDNESDAY TRIPLE TREAT from sportsplus
NBA
PHILADELPHIA
VS.
MILWAUKEE
9:00 am LIVE - 7:00 pm Replay
BIKINI DESTINATIONS
TAHITI
9:30 PM
WORLD POKER TOUR
MISSISSIPPI
WPT
10:00 PM

Who doesn't like Go Teng Kok?

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

YOU CAN'T help but like Mr. Go Teng Kok.

The good guy often offers assistance as though he has been born with a reservoir of kindness.

He could also be very deserving of praise.

There's one problem, though. His advisers often paint GTK as a sinless crusader, as when they compose letters in his defense.

We were, in fact, on the receiving end of one such letter the other week.

It was like this. When Mr. Go sent a letter singling me out for malice, it landed straight on my desk.

The sports section would have nothing to do with it.

So I asked Allan, our very reliable trouble-shooter at the INQUIRER desk, to deliver it, pronto, to the Opinion section, where it properly belonged.

True enough, the letter saw print.

GTK, Go-Thank-You to his zealous defenders, insisted in no soft terms that he was the white-attired sports figure being attacked for allegedly sowing terror on the billiards front.

Go defended his reputation with both guns blazing.

The poor fellow has had his day in court.

It was his right. I left it at that.

Case closed.

***

Yesterday, the first day of this fiery Fire Prevention month, I was however left with no choice but open the drawer again.

Rene Saguisag, the tireless freedom fighter, has gallantly gone out of his way to explain the case against Mr. Go.

It is with awe and deep gratitude that I've decided to print part of Ka Rene's piece on GTK:

"On Saturday, the Daily Inquirer printed a letter from Go Teng Kok, president of the Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association, where he shafted my friend, Recah Trinidad, and my primo, Ernie Fajardo. He said he had merely arranged a meeting between Ernie, billiards association prez, and his secretary general, Joaquin Perez de Tagle.

"In GTK's letter, he sounded as if he were lawyering for the secretary general. If he wants to boost anyone, that is his right. It is something else to claim though that he is an honest broker when his letter was one-sided advocacy of a seeming protégé of his in what is perceived to be his seemingly insatiable Pac-Man-ish bid for power. He cannot talk of being neutral in someone's favor.

"The swashbuckling GTK I first heard about when Senator Erap Estrada delivered his first privilege speech in 1987, on illegal gambling. Now, I have always been open to legalizing gambling. The Pinoy would bet on anything that moves. But the fate of local sports should not be left to chance or a gamble. GTK, with all due respect, cannot be billiards' honest broker."

***

Allow me to state, in all candidness, that I had used Ka Rene's opinion to set the record straight.

I did not consider it very necessary, but it also made me feel good.

It would be quite hypocritical to deny this.

Of course, we had again turned to Ka Rene in an effort to save RP sports from unnecessary trash and terror.

For a fact, Go Teng Kok, with all his kindness, will never be lacking in grateful defenders who will work to clear his name.

The jolly guy has that clout and innate charm.

Just the same, these friends would be helping RP sports a lot if they continue pumping the fountain of kindness in the GTK.

They must stick to the facts and stay focused.

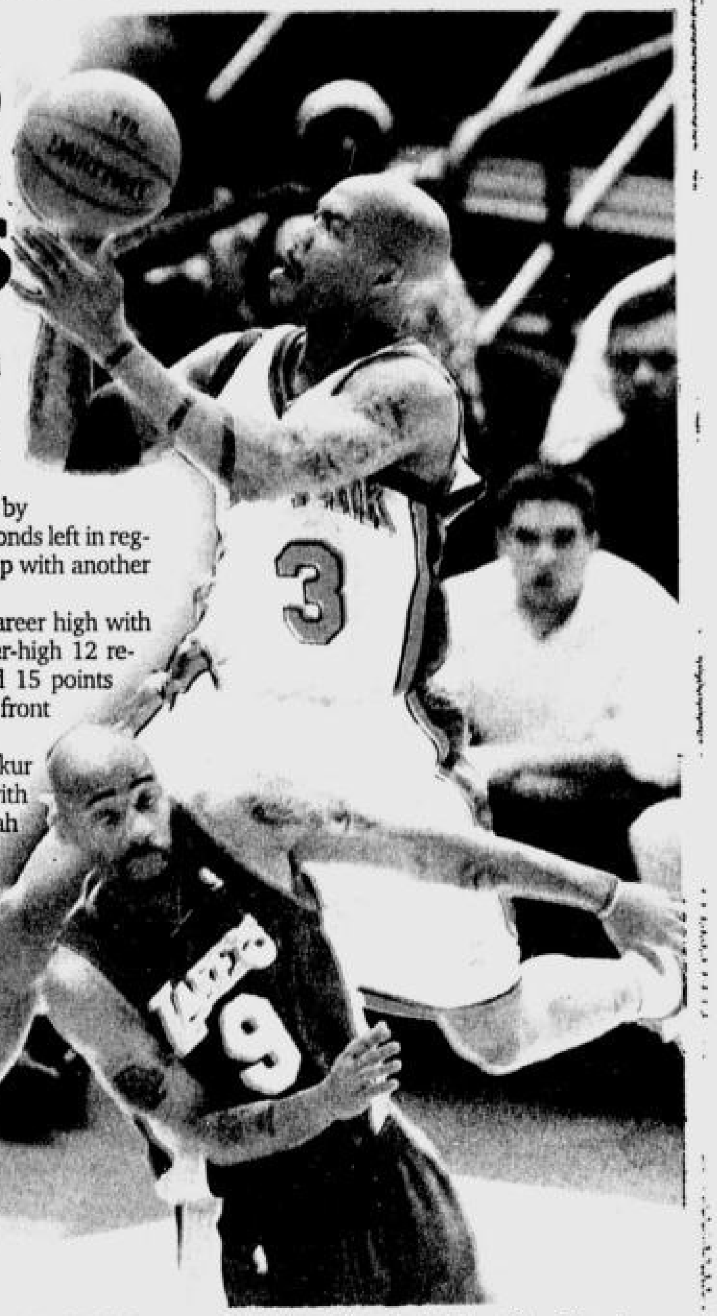
These friends should make sure Go Teng Kok does not get distracted in his new crusade.

They must prevent him from visiting and befriending an ugly past.

This is the best way his friends could shield Mr. Go from harm.

Philippine sports can no longer afford crooks and stinking garbage.

Spurs, Knicks hold off rivals



STEPHON Marbury of the New York Knicks goes up against Chucky Atkins of Los Angeles. AFP

CLEVELAND—Tim Duncan made a 19-foot jumper just before the final horn sounded, giving the San Antonio Spurs a 94-92 victory Monday night over the Cleveland Cavaliers, who dropped their third straight.

Duncan missed his first seven shots and didn't score in the game's first 19 minutes. But with the game on the line, he took a pass from Tony Parker, gathered himself and calmly knocked down his shot without a hand in his face.

After going 0-for-7, Duncan went 9-for-10 from the floor, finishing with 20 points and 11 rebounds. Parker added 19 points, eight rebounds and 10 assists.

Zydrunas Ilgauskas had 26 points and LeBron James finished with 20 points, eight rebounds and seven assists for the Cavaliers, who have lost four of five and are entering a tough stretch of upcoming games.

San Antonio's Manu Ginobili, who finished with 17 points, could have put the Spurs up by four points, but missed a pair of freethrows with 19.2 seconds to go.

Ilgauskas tied the game on a dunk with 14.2 seconds left after James whipped a pass to the wide-open center.

In New York, Tim Thomas scored a season-high 35 points, and the Knicks recovered after blowing a 10-point lead in the final 46 seconds of regulation to defeat the Los Angeles Lakers, 117-115.

The victory was the third straight for the Knicks, matching their longest winning streak of the season. New York remained in last place in the Atlantic Division but pulled within five games of the first-place Boston Celtics.

Kobe Bryant forced overtime by making a 3-pointer with 4.4 seconds left in regulation, but he couldn't come up with another big play at the end.

Michael Sweetney tied his career high with 19 points and grabbed a career-high 12 rebounds, and Kurt Thomas had 15 points and 12 rebounds as New York's front line dominated.

In Salt Lake City, Mehmet Okur converted a three-point play with 21.7 seconds remaining and Utah held for an 97-86 squeaker over the Los Lakers Clippers.

In Dallas, Dirk Nowitzki scored 28 points, including a key jumper and two freethrows in the final minute, and the Mavericks hung on to beat the team with the worst record in the Western Conference, 90-86. *AP*

Fil-Am swimmer faces tough SEAG foes

PANGILINAN

By Jasmine W. Payo

FILIPINO-AMERICAN Jackie Pangilinan has her work cut out for her if she wants to bring home a gold medal in the coming Southeast Asian Games that the country is hosting.

Despite a collection of record times, Pangilinan's father, the Ilocos Sur-born Florante, is keeping his daughter's confidence in check because of equally impressive results by her potential SEA Games rivals.

"Jackie, Nicolette Teo and Siow Sy are posting close times in the 100- and 200-m. breaststroke short course yard here in the US," said the elder Pangilinan.

Teo will represent Singapore in the biennial meet to be held here in December.

"It could be a tight race for gold going to the SEA games in November."

The New Jersey-based Pangilinan is working her way to top form, though.

Just recently, she broke Harvard's 11-year-old mark in the 100-m breaststroke of the Ivy League Women's Swimming and Diving Championships at Princeton's DeNunzio Pool.

The 18-year-old tanker, who broke the Philippine records in the 100- and 200-m breaststroke at the 2004 Athens Olympics, finished in 1:03.65, a fraction better than the old school record set by Deborah Kory in 1992 (1:03.68).

In the Olympics last August, Pangilinan shattered the Philippine record in the 200-m breaststroke when she timed in at 2:33.38, almost two seconds better than the national mark of 2:35.01.

She also broke the local 100-m breaststroke record of 1:12.82 by clocking in at 1:12.47.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE

Wednesday, March 2, 2005

TUESDAY
7:30 PM and 10:00 PM
WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY
7:00 PM and 10:00 PM
American Idol
ABC
SPECIAL SCHEDULE THIS WEEK!

ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2				Showbiz No. 1	Sandara's Romance	Masked Rider Ryuki		Gatekeepers	TV Patrol		Spirits	Krystala	Til Death Do Us Part	Hiram	Save The Last Dance	Yes Yes Show			Insider
NBN	Value Vision	Value Vision		Value Vision	Teledyaryo	Value Vision		Talk Ko 'To		Linya		Teledyaryo		Sinulog Festival				Paco Park Presents	
ABC 5			Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko	PBA Game-Bol	PBA		PBA		Sentro	PBA					Big News	American Idol		Look Who's Talking	
GMA 7		Saang Sulok Ng Langit	Joyride	Glass Shoes	One Piece	Knock Out	Slam Dunk	24 Oras		Extra Challenge		Mulawin		Starstruck	Stairway To Heaven	Nuts Entertainment			Saksi
RPN 9	Metro TV Shopping			Hey Arnold!	As Told By Ginger	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	Entertainment Tonight	Scrubs	Everwood		Ally McBeal		For Love Or Money 1		Newswatch Now	Cargo For Truth		
IBC 13		Lifestyle		EZ Shop		Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Lifestyle		On Air Tambayan		Desk	Junior Reyes Report	Bestfriends	Celebrity Single	Entrepinoy	IBC News Tonite	Breaking Barriers	
Solar		Wwe Heat		WWE Confidential		Fantastic Four	Static Shock	Godzilla	Incredible Hulk	Stargate SG1		Wwe Raw				Wwe Heat		WWE Confidential	
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues	Rugrats	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	Nick Mix						Rugrats
MYX		Urban MYX		Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	MYX Live!		My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC		Knock First	JKX	The Today Show		Starting Over		NBC Nightly News		Will & Grace	Good Morning Miami					Tonight Show With Jay Leno			
Studio 23								Batman Beyond	Project Arms	Wazzup Wazzup	Mr. Bean	C.S.I.	Angel	Las Vegas Vacation		News Central	The Oprah Winfrey Show		Yes Dear
AXN		Hollywood's Greatest Stunts	Hollywood's Greatest Stunts	Train Wrecks		Ripley's Believe It or Not		Samurai X	Samurai X	Andromeda (Season III)		Maximum Exposure		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation		The Amazing Race 7			
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		American Idol		Ally McBeal		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	American Idol		Philly		Third Watch III		Friends	American Idol
CNN				Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic		Art That Ate America		National Geographic's Taboo		Chasing Time	On Assignment	The Snake Wranglers	Croc Chronicles With Dr. Brady Barr	Dogs With Jobs	Insects From Hell	About Asia		National Geographic Specials		Bottle Battles: Kwang Bang		Taboo	
Solar Sports		IBF Korea Open '05 WSngls		Swatch Fivb Finals, Osaka & Carolina				GWS ep.7-2005	WTA '05 Volvo Women's Open SF2				NBA TV Daily	NBA Game Detroit @ Portland					NBA Inside Stuff
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Molto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Wolfgang Puck's								New York Nick	
HBO	Time Of The Wolf (2.35PM)			National Security (4.15PM)			Fancy Dancing (5.45PM)				Rapid Exchange (7.25PM)			Dead Calm			The Next Karate Kid		
Star Movies	Critical Assembly			Mixed Nuts			Pirates Of The Caribbean: Curse Of The Black Pearl (5.35PM)					Dummy							
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Sylvester & Tweety Mysteries	Police Academy	He-Man & The Masters Of The Universe	Static Shock	Yu-Gi-Oh!	Shaman King	The Looney Tunes Show		The Powerpuff Girls	Codename: Kids Next Door	Mr. T	Josie And The Pussycats	Boomerang: The Superfriends	Yu-Gi-Oh!
ESPN		Motorsport Asia	Big East Conf.: Pittsburgh vs. Boston College				Big 12 Conf.: Oklahoma vs Texas	2004 AMA Motocross-125cc Buchanon, MI USA			Goals!	SportsCenter Asia	Pool/Snooker Mosconi Cup '04		Big 10 Conf.: Wildcard Game				SportsCenter Asia
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	The Sleepover Club	Art Attack/Untalkative Bunny	That's So Raven	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Lilo & Stitch/Untalkative Bunny				My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	According To Jim	America's Funniest Home Video		
Cinemax	A Death In The Family			Batteries Not Included			Obsessed (5.45PM)			Lethal Weapon (7:15PM)				Clockstoppers			The Skulls II (10:35PM)		
Hallmark Channel	Mad About You	More Than Meets The Eye				Play With Me Sesame	Sesame Street		Bewitched	Judging Amy		Hustle		Cavedweller			Strong Medicine (10.35PM)		Judging Amy (11.25PM)
Discovery Channel		Science Mysteries		Science Frontiers		Wild Science		Ultimate Discovery						Wild Science		Ultimate Discovery		Hour Asia	
MTV Philippines			MTV Hanging Out		MTV Most Wanted		TRL		MTV Buzzworthy	MTV Diyes		Wade Robson'	Globally Dismissed	Boiling Point	Pimp My Ride	MTV Talk	Asia Aid: The Road To BKK	VH1 Video Collections	
Sports Plus				Italia Serie A				Inside the PGA		NBA Game Philadelphia @ Milwaukee					Bikini Destination	World Poker Tour ep.7 Mississippi			
EWTN	Council Of Faith	Angelus (3.15PM)	Refurbishing The Soul	The Donut Man	Faith Factory	The Holy Rosary With Mother Angelica and the Nuns Of Our Lady Of Angels Monastery	Saints For The Third Millenium	The Virtues	EWTN Gallery	Mother Angelica Live Classics		One in Their Hearts	Pope Pius XII	Daily Mass		Angelus (10.15PM)	St. Catherine Of Sienna	Our Father's Plan	

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Listen up, Pinoy rappers

By Pocholo Concepcion
Contributor

BOASTING of one's own greatness had long been the norm for both established and upcoming rap music artists. The problem was, most of the stuff they take pride in (who writes better sex/drugs/violence-related lyrics) had become trite and contrived, if not pathetic.

This problem seeped into the local hip hop community, so we got, for instance, local rap with overtly vulgar topics.

The situation sucked, of course... until Kanye West came along.

"The College Dropout," West's debut CD, is honorable for two reasons: sense and structure.

It translates ugly human experience into a beautiful story of faith and redemption. Throughout the album, snippets of the 26-year-old Chicago-born Kanye's personal circumstances unfold to describe how life could be wonderful if one continues to learn from it.

Modesty aside

The reality of learning from the streets, as opposed to gaining knowledge in school, clash in recurring images, with Kanye himself as example. Apparently, it's the story of almost every other poor black man—being jobless, living on welfare, resorting to various rackets—except that our protagonist knew he had talent that would someday take him out of the dumps.

Notwithstanding typos and a small font size, the CD's lyric sheet provides clear evidence of the urban squalor, racism and a consuming apathy that Kanye sought to overcome.

He believed he could rap. First he worked as a record producer, gained notice from his association with Jay-Z, and became a hot name in Roc-A-Fella Records where he eventually signed a solo album deal.

10 categories

In the recent Grammys, Kanye was the most-nominated artist, figuring in 10 categories including Album of the Year (which went to Ray Charles' "Genius Loves Company"). He was reportedly disappointed because "The College Dropout" won only Best Rap Album and Best Rap Song ("Jesus Walks").

Kanye casts modesty aside when discussing his frustration over US critics' response to his album: "Any review that wasn't five stars? I just feel they weren't listening to me. Maybe it's too good. I listened to my album, and then I improved on it. I felt like it wasn't five out of five before, but now it definitely is."

Why does "The

LISTEN UP/ A31

KANYE WEST's album talks of faith in God more than of sex and violence, and sold two million copies last year alone.

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Richard Corliss, TIME MAGAZINE

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Greg Russell, WDWB TV

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6 GOLD (SDDS) THE AVIATOR
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JARS OF CLAY: SHOW YOUR LOVE
March 2, Wednesday

NORAH JONES IN CONCERT
March 12, Saturday

RIVERMAYA & KITCHIE NADAL LIVE!
April 16, Saturday

CENTER EVENTS

BINIBINIS AT ARANETA CENTER	*Press Presentation, March 8, Tuesday, 11am, Gateway Mall* *Parade of Beauties, March 13, Sunday, 3pm* *Grand Coronation Night, March 19 Saturday, 7pm, Araneta Coliseum*
COOL JAZZ COOL CLASSICS	*Free jazz performance by East Of The City band every Fridays & Saturdays at the Coliseum Circle*

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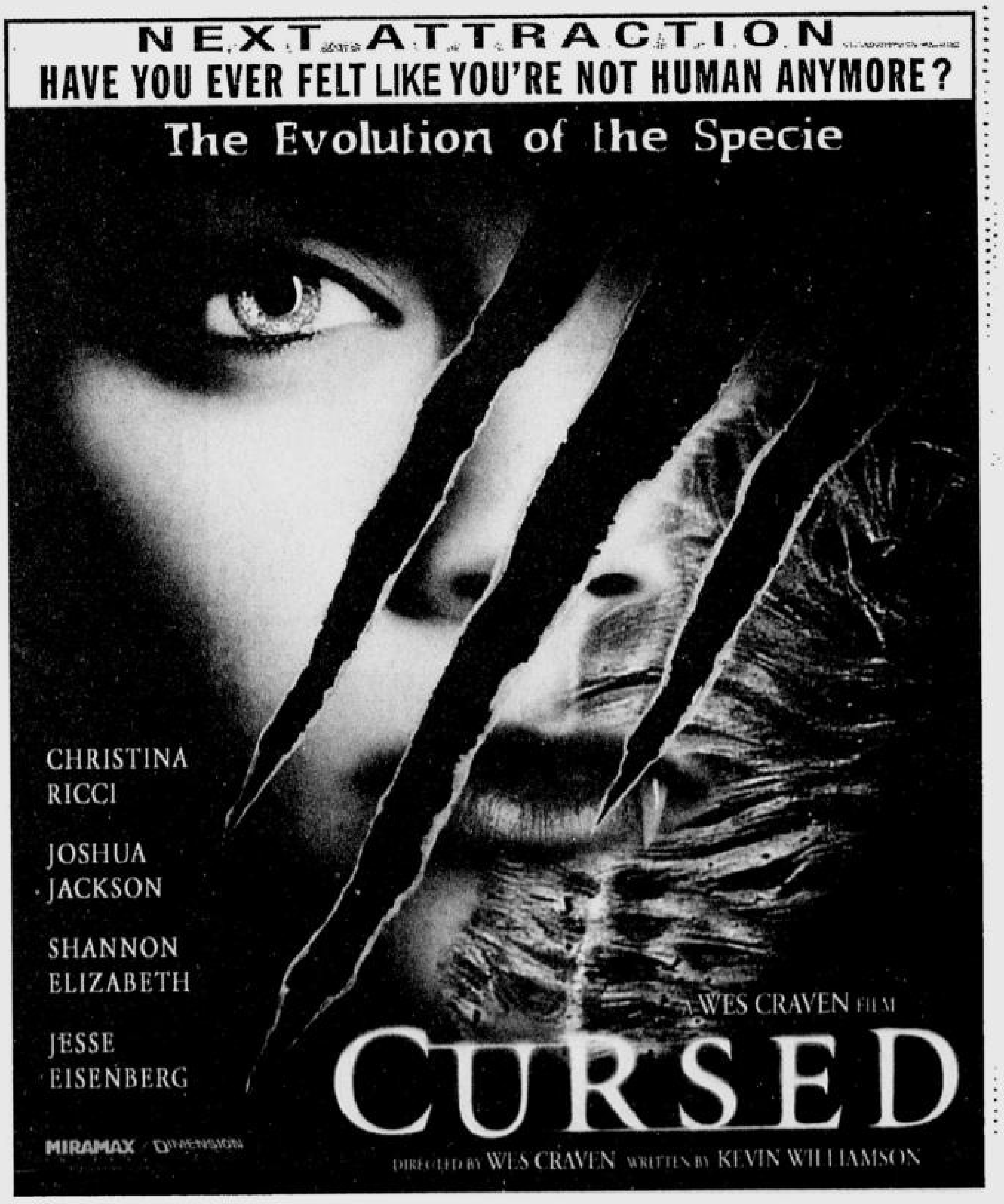

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MILLION DOLLAR BABY

Directed by Clint Eastwood
Stars Hilary Swank, Clint Eastwood, Morgan Freeman

THIS year's top Oscar contenders run more than two hours—"The Aviator," 2:48; "Ray," 2:33. This baby, which won Best Picture in Sunday's Oscars, runs a little shorter, 2:17. Thank goodness.

Director Dirty Harry himself says this is not just another boxing movie. "It's a love story about a person who is distressed about his nonexistent relationship with his daughter, and who then finds a sort of surrogate daughter in this young girl who is dying to make her mark in the world as a boxer."

In the website Creative Loafing, Matt Brunson wrote this Jan. 26 review: "Swank's work here is even more impressive than her Oscar-winning turn in 'Boys Don't Cry,' and while Freeman has been consistently dependable over the past two decades, this marks a career-best performance for Eastwood, capping a remarkable career that has seen him mature as a filmmaker on both sides of the camera.

". . . You won't read anything here about the second half of the film, after it turns on a dime and heads off in an unexpected direction. In fact, the critical community as a whole has done an exemplary job of remaining mum about the plot developments. Indeed, there's very little about 'Million Dollar Baby' that feels extraneous—this is tight, taut storytelling, helmed by a man still able to teach Hollywood's young punks a thing or two."

HITCH

Directed by Andy Tennant
Stars Will Smith, Eva Mendes, Kevin James, Michael Rapaport

A professional matchmaker's program is threatened by a gossip columnist who enrolls as a student and plans on publishing an exposé on his fraudulent methods.

Eleanor Ringel Gillespie wrote this review for the Atlanta-Journal Constitution: "In dating, lowering your standards can be dangerous. In dating movies, lowering your standards is almost inevitable.

". . . 'Hitch,' which stars Will Smith as a matchmaker in Manhattan, is a little like being on a blind date. Bits of it are charming. much of it is awkward and several sequences plod along with the self-consciousness of a first-date stop-and-start conversation.

"Director Andy Tennant, whose credits waffle from the adorable 'Ever After' to the execrable 'Sweet Home Alabama,' lacks the imagination and/or skill to salvage the script's lapses. However, his movie's romantic Manhattan setting rivals Woody Allen's New York (and includes some less-familiar downtown sites)."

OUIJA BOARD

Directed by Byeong-ki Ahn
Stars Gyu-Ri Kim, Se-eun Lee, Yu-ri Lee, Seong-min Choi

A short Korean horror movie about a tormented teenager who puts a curse on her classmates using an Ouija Board. As each of the kids mysteriously burns to death, the school is thrown into chaos.

Haggles wrote this review for www.koroshiya.co.uk. He/she is uh, most probably Korean. Read for yourself: "This is another horror film of the "Ring/Ju-on" genre. You would think that by now they would be able to make a horror film of its own but nope they stick to a tried and tested format, which works but is becoming tiresome now . . . This starts off very impressive I must admit but tends to wane about an hour into the movie but enough to keep you watching . . . an average horror movie nothing special I'm afraid (but) ok for a rainy day."

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8 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
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11 INFECTION
12 MEET THE FOCKERS

sm city fairview
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3 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
4 CONSTANTINE
5 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
6 THE AVIATOR
7 HITCH
8 SON OF THE MASK
9 LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
10 LITTLE BLACK BOOK
11 SAKSI DRIVER
12 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

sm city north edsa
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2 SON OF THE MASK
3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
4 INFECTION
5 BUNSHINSABA
6 CONSTANTINE
7 HITCH
8 MILLION DOLLAR BABY

sm city sta. mesa
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
5 CONSTANTINE
6 BUNSHINSABA
7 HITCH
8 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
9 SON OF THE MASK
10 THE AVIATOR

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2 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED
5 BUNSHINSABA
6 THE AVIATOR
7 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
8 CONSTANTINE
9 SON OF THE MASK
10 HITCH

sm city manila
1 HITCH
2 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
3 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
4 THE AVIATOR
5 LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
6 CONSATNTINE
7 BUNSHINSABA
8 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
9 SON OF THE MASK
10 DREAMBOY
11 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
12 INFECTION

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2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

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2 HITCH
3 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
4 SON OF THE MASK

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2 SON OF THE MASK
3 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
4 CONSTANTINE

LUZON

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3 HITCH
4 INFECTION
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4 THE AVIATOR
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6 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
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8 HITCH

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Women's filmfest opens

THE MUCH anticipated 15th International Women's Film Festival (IWFF) opened yesterday with "Love Without Frontier" by Pouran Derakhshandeh, Iran's first woman director.

Screening was at the UP Film Institute's Cine Adarna. Derakshandeh will be special guest in a forum set today, 2 p.m., also at Cine Adarna.

At 7 p.m., "Free Radicals" by Barbara Albert will be screened.

Tomorow starting at 3 p.m., the festival cases independent short films by Filipino women: "Liyab" by Sockie Fernandez, "Laya" by Jurisprudence Cabuhat, "O" by Aurea Anden, "Pinich Product" by Kat Loreños, "Ahon" by Candice Garcia, "Ang Kalye ni Aling Jeth" by Erica Junio, "Luna" by Frances Lacuesta, "Kabalintinaan" by Celeste Lumasac, and "Reyna ng Kadiliman" by Pam Miras.

The festival closes March 11 with Ellen Ongkeko-Marfil's "Mga Pusang Gala," 7 p.m.

For screening schedules, call 926-3640 or 920-6863.

Listen up . . .

From page A29

College Dropout" sound like a perfect record? To be sure, it's not poles apart from other rap albums in the sense that cuss words and sex talk still abound. What differentiates it from the rest is the way dirty-sounding lines are used in proper context—like, in his discourse on police brutality, drugs and his own wayward past.

Before starting work on the album, Kanye smashed his jaw in a car accident and almost died. His chin required a metal plate, and his teeth had to be wired back together. He considers his survival a miracle. So again we hear snippets of it in the tracks where he professes faith in God.

'Jesus Walks'

This faith is nowhere expressed more profoundly than in "Jesus Walks." The singer asks God to show him the way because the devil tries to break him down at every turn. While declaring that humanity is at war, not only with society, racism and terrorism but also with itself, Kanye pleads in synch with the metaphor of life's spiritual journey: "I pray is that my feet don't fail me now."

As for structure, Kanye employs rich elements of black music, weaving melodic arrangements with the voices of guest artists as well as his own, to create a rap album that not only talks but sings. No wonder it sold two million copies last year alone.

Listen up, local rappers.

SeeMall!

AYALA CINEMAS THX

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1	THX HITCH	SON OF THE MASK	CONSTANTINE	GUARANTEED SEATS THX MILLION DOLLAR BABY 2 45, 5 35, 8 25, 11 15	FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
2	MILLION DOLLAR BABY	HITCH	LEMONY SNICKET'S	GUARANTEED SEATS THX HITCH 1:20, 3 50, 6:20, 8 50, 11:20	ALFIE
3	CONSTANTINE	CONSTANTINE	GUARANTEED SEATS THX MILLION DOLLAR BABY 2:00, 4 50, 7 40, 10:30	GUARANTEED SEATS LEMONY SNICKET'S 2 10, 4 30, 6 50, 9 10, 11 30	CONSTANTINE
4	LEMONY SNICKET'S	MILLION DOLLAR BABY	BUNSHINBA	GUARANTEED SEATS CONSTANTINE 1 50, 4 15, 6 40, 9 15, 11 30	SON OF THE MASK
5	THE AVIATOR		SON OF THE MASK	GUARANTEED SEATS THE AVIATOR 1:45, 5:00, 8 15, 11 30	
6			HITCH		
7			THE AVIATOR		

	GB1 GREENBELT 1
1	MILLION DOLLAR BABY 12:30, 3:20, 6:10, 9.00
2	HITCH 12:20, 2:45, 5:10, 7:35 10:00

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6 CONSTANTINE
7 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
8 INFECTION
9 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
10 HITCH

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12
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MARCO ALCARAZ expresses himself with a depth that's unusual in neophytes, says "Manaoag" producer-director Ben Yalung.

Movie miracles are made of these

By Nini Valera

A MIRACLE involving rose petals renewed movie newcomer Marco Alcaraz's faith in God, according to his manager, Arnold Vegafria.

Late last year, Vegafria said, images of the Virgin Mary, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and other religious icons appeared embossed on rose petals after Marco held the petals near his heart and prayed with a visionary.

But the actor did not talk about the incident during his exclusive interview with INQUIRER Entertainment last week.

"It probably scared him," Vegafria said.

However, Marco talked about the smaller miracles in his life, like landing the lead role in the film "Birhen ng Manaoag," which premieres on Saturday at SM Megamall Cinema 3. A former basketball player for San Sebastian College, Marco went up against Ronian Poe, John Lloyd, and Jomari Yllana for the part of a young man about to become a priest, but who loses faith in God when his personal plea for a miracle is not granted.

The movie tells stories based on true accounts of devotees' of the miraculous centuries-old Lady of Manaoag in Pangasinan.

"I went to a script reading, but I heard the role was for Ronian," Marco told INQUIRER Entertainment. "But [the next] day ... I was told I got the role. That, I think, is a miracle."

Basketball dream

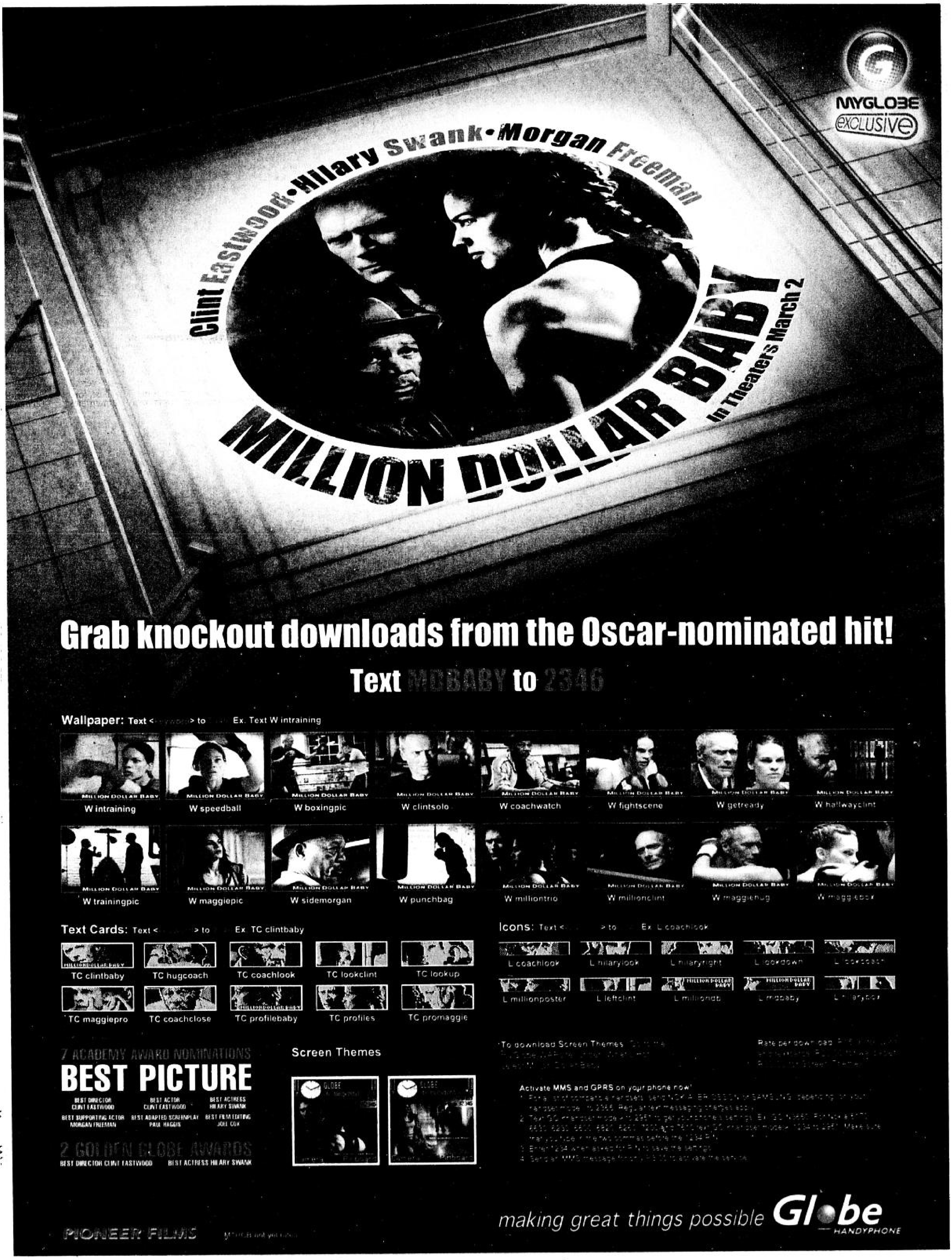
Before Marco experienced the miracle of show business, he chased his dream of becoming a basketball icon.

"I came to Manila (from Cebu) to play basketball," he said. "My father wanted me to be a basketball player. I applied for a basketball scholarship in several schools and was admitted to San Sebastian. But I was injured twice in my rookie year, and I have been sidelined since. It could be a sign ... I still play, but not for competition."

The injuries made him question his faith: "I turned my back on the Lord."

He also had bouts of self-pity.

MOVIE/ A2-2



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BEST ACTRESS HILARY SWANK

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Movie miracles are made of these

From page A2-1

"During [physical] therapy, I would be shouting and crying," he confided. "The main ligament holding the knee had been torn, and I needed skin grafts to repair the damage. There's now a screw in my knee and a stainless steel in my wrist (from the first injury). But now I think what happened was a blessing in disguise."

After appearing in several television commercials and print ads and doing ramp modeling, Marco was discovered for show biz.

Praying for a miracle

"ABS-CBN was looking for [an athletic] talent," he narrated. "My manager asked me to try. Fortunately, I made it, and got a role in a soap that ran for about a year."

Marco played Axel in "It Might Be You." He had a cameo role in Director Gil Portes' "A Beautiful Life," as the son of Dina Bonnevie. He was cast as the sidekick of Jay Manalo in "Aishte Imasu 1949," Director Joel Lamangan's World War II epic. "Manaoag" is only Marco's third movie—and it could be his last.

"That's why I'm praying so hard for another miracle ... that this movie makes money," said Marco. He described "Manaoag" as a feel-good movie that also hopes to renew the faith of lapsed Catholics in the Philippines.

Joining Marco in praying is producer-director, Ben Yalung, who admitted that casting the actor was a leap of faith for him.

"I don't go much for dialogue [delivery]," Yalung said in a separate interview. "We auditioned him and I saw depth in his facial expressions. That's unusual for a newcomer. He's very impressive, and he delivers. The movie will speak for itself."

Yalung revealed that, aside from investing prayers, he also plunked some P12 million into the movie. He said he hoped to recover the money in about three months.

He added that even Joyce Jimenez was not in the original cast. "She went to Manaoag and was really touched. She experienced a lot of changes and decided she didn't want to do bold movies anymore."

Himself a veteran producer of bold movies ("Perfumed Gardens," "Alexandra"), but also of action films ("Partida"), Yalung has lately concentrated on making religious films following a close encounter with God upon joining the religious celebrity group Oasis of Love.

"You cannot serve two masters," he explained. He has produced and directed "Kristo," "Ama Namin," and "Sister Faustina."

No preacher

"People think I'm crazy for doing movies like these," Yalung admitted, "but it's a calling." He was "no preacher," he said, but he meant to reach out with films.

Like Marco, Yalung experienced the miracle of the rose petals. He showed to Inquirer Entertainment his own petals embossed with religious images.

He recounted: "Three days before we started shooting 'Manaoag' in November last year, I went to this visionary to pray for guidance. He asked me to buy white roses and put the petals near my heart while I prayed with him. After two minutes, the visionary asked me to look at the petals. I saw on each petal different images of Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary. If that's not a miracle, I don't know what is."

Yalung claimed he had the petals tested for authenticity, and that he was told they were real. These petals are now preserved in transparent film cases and accompany him everywhere he goes.

"I always bring with me a miracle," Yalung said.

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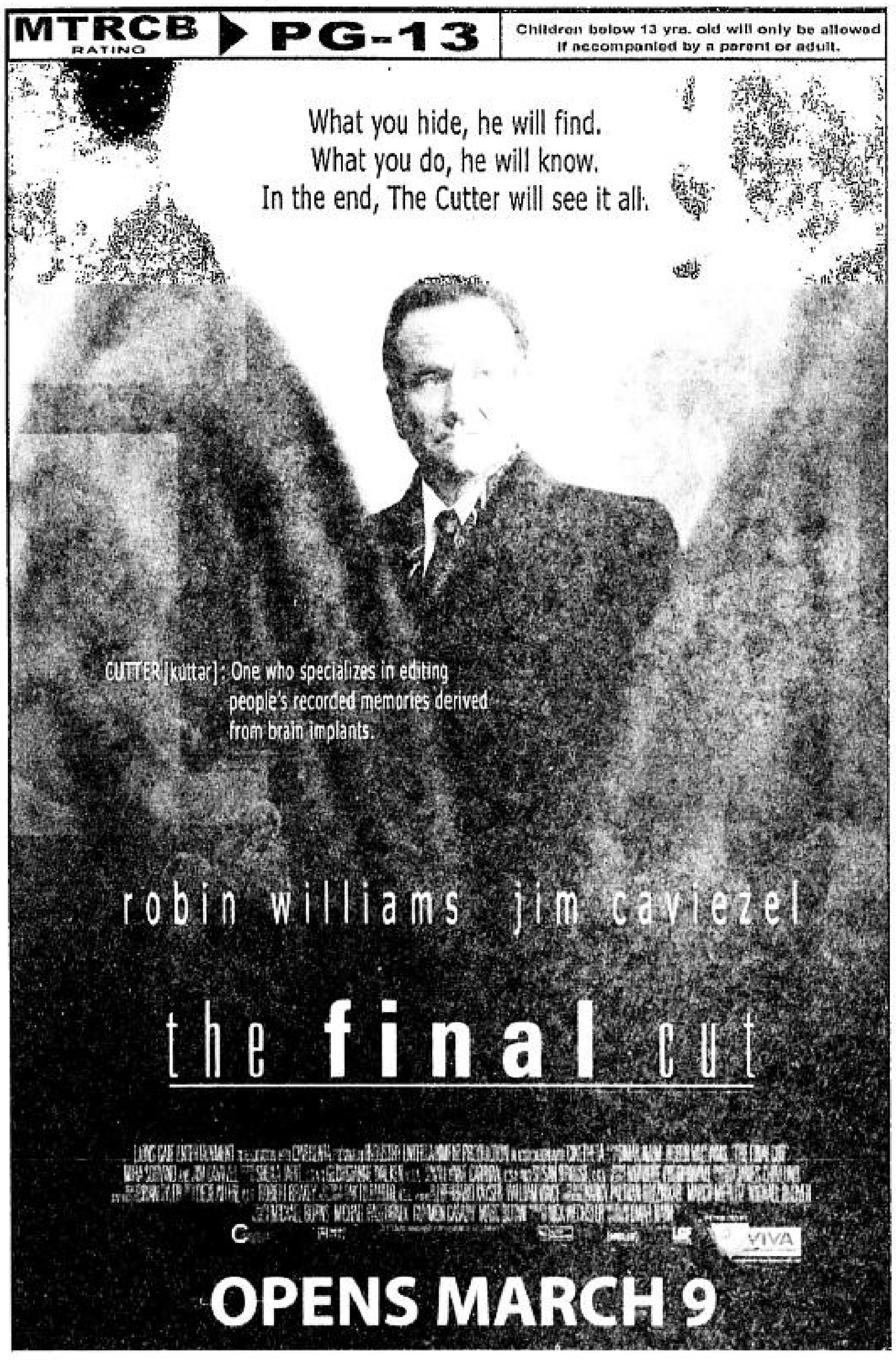
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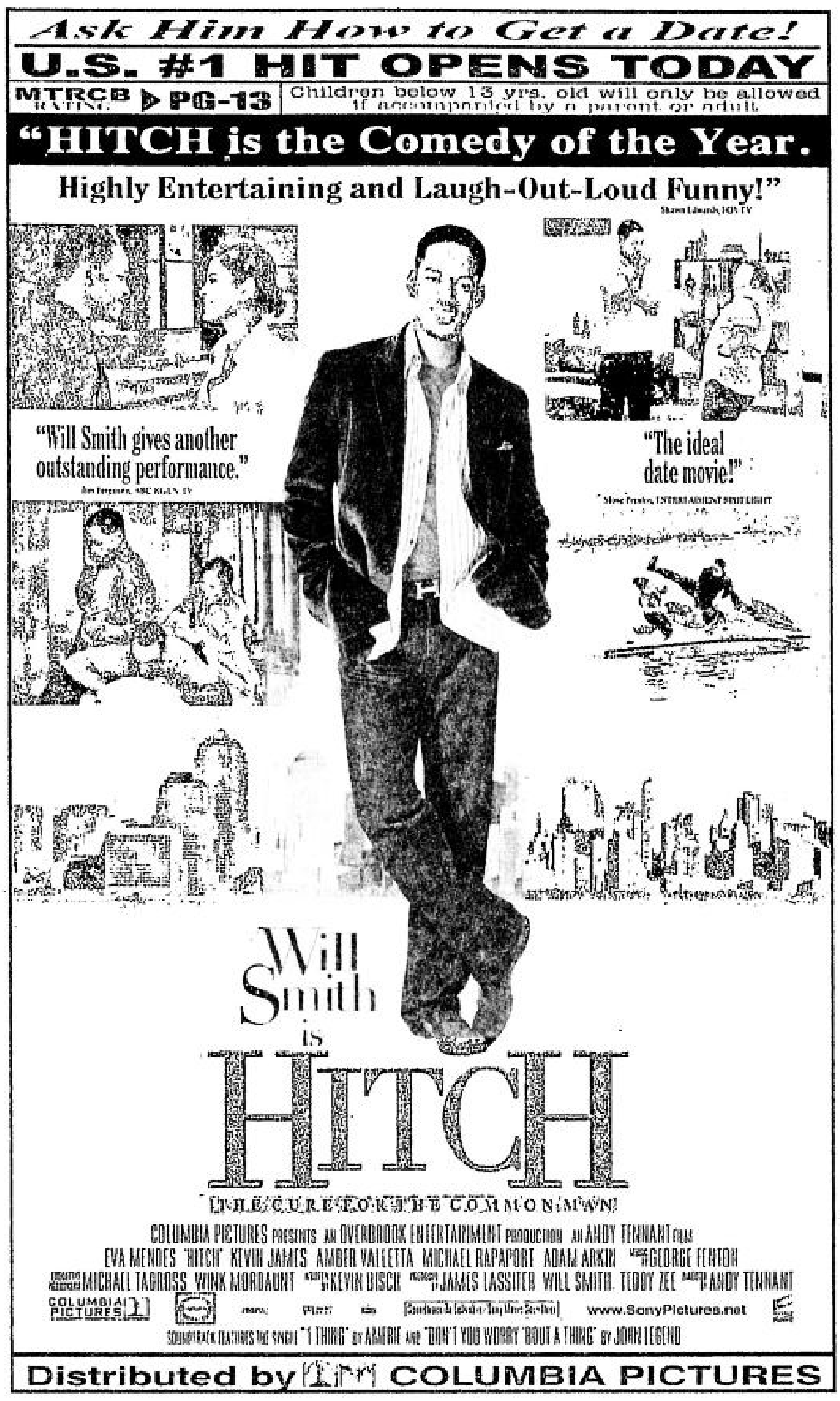
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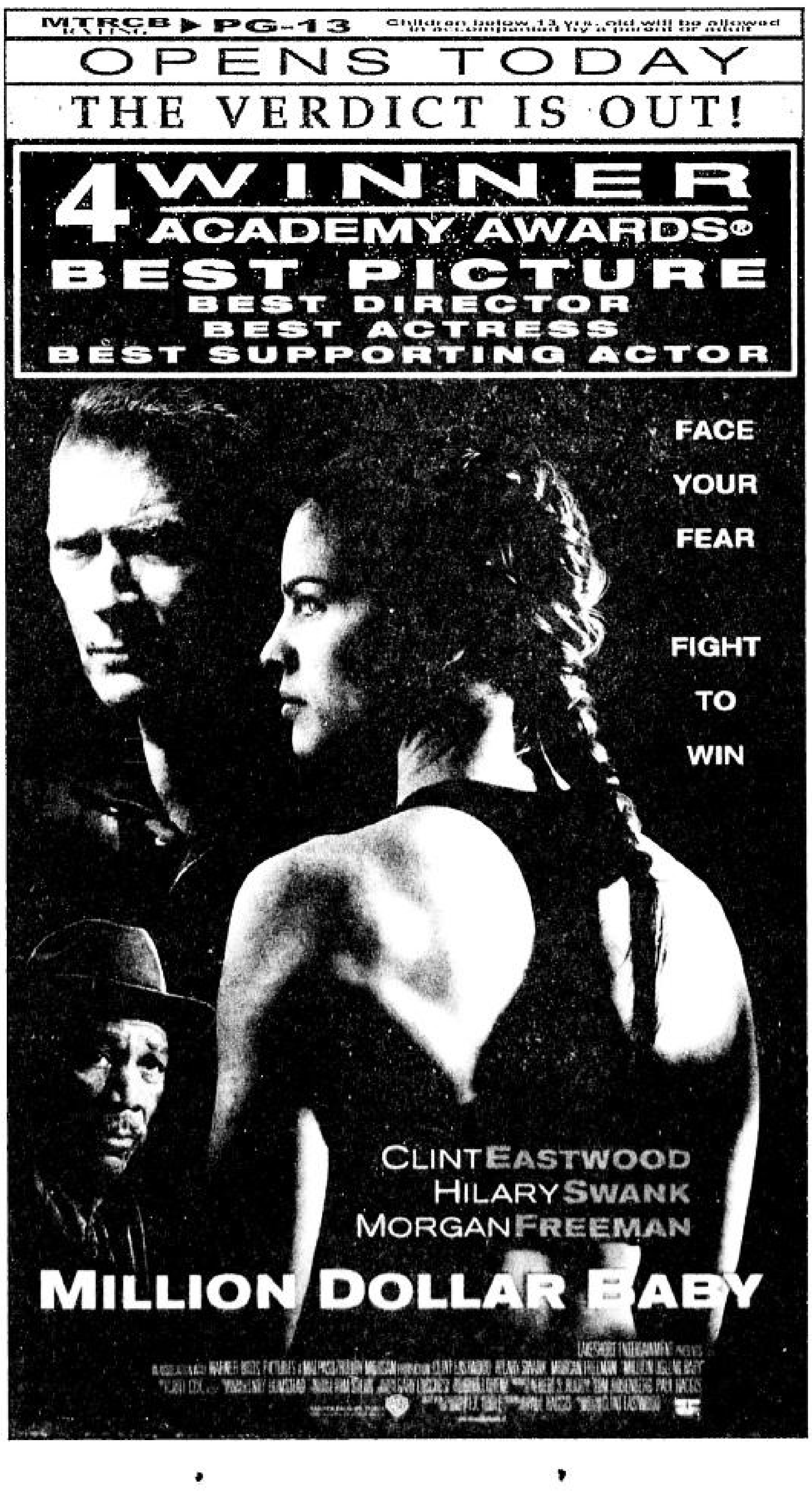
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'Brini Maxwell' walks a witty tightrope

SOME MONTHS, we viewed "The Brini Maxwell Show" on Lifestyle Network, and felt that there was something not quite "right" about its blonde host.

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

She seemed to be too ladylike, too carefully dolled up, with all her outfits matched with accessories of exactly the same colors, her speaking voice perfectly modulated, her movements and gestures the acme of poise and sophistication, etc.

What was wrong with this picture? It was just too perfect, like Brini was in mortal dread of making a mistake. Now, why would she be so concerned about doing no wrong? Could it be that all of this was an act? Could it be that Ms Brini was—a man?

Well, much later, our suspicion was confirmed, and we learned that the lifestyle show host was really a female impersonator named **Ben Sander**.

The interesting thing is, instead of getting turned off by this belated discovery, it's made Brini and "her" show even more fascinating viewing for us. We are hugely entertained by its unique combination of helpful homemaking and decorating tips *and* its subtly campy quality.

Walking a very witty tightrope, the program dares to sweetly spoof TV lifestyle shows in general, and itself in particular. Thus, even as Brini dispenses valid advice about what to wear for any and all occasions, her overly arch manner bemusingly cautions us not to take this sort of thing too far.

Another interesting aspect of Brini's impersonation is its being so far removed from the usual gay act in these parts. Instead of coming off like a screaming fairy, as so many gays on local TV do in a misguided effort to be funny and entertaining, Brini focuses on being more womanly than most women, with specific emphasis on subtlety and sophistication.

So, we'll continue viewing Brini's show for its droll combination of helpful tips and subtle gender-spoofing comedy. If you'd like to sample the show for yourself, you can catch it on the Lifestyle Network channel every Saturday at 8 p.m.

Feedback

FROM **Paul R. Mortel** of Marikina City: "Sometime last year, the Advertising Board of the Philippines commissioned a study that will serve as a basis in regulating the number of commercials that can be aired per hour on TV (the present KBP rule is 18 commercial minutes an hour). Viewers like me are interested to know the results of that study."

'Spark'

ON MARCH 5 at 7:30 p.m., CNN's "Spark" program focuses on technology that is changing the business and medical fields.

From giant IT companies to small movie special effects outfits, open-source software like Linux is being embraced. Program host **Kristie Lu Stout** interviews the CEO of Novell, a software solutions company, and the CEO of London's Moving Pictures Company about adopting Linux.

'Amazing Race 7'

THE SEVENTH season of "The Amazing Race" kicks off on the AXN channel with a two-hour special episode tonight at 10. A week later, it returns to its regular time slot every Wednesday at 8 p.m.

While the participation of "Survivors: All Stars" winners **Amber BrKich** and runner-up fiancé **Rob Mariano** has been confirmed by executive producer **Bertram van Munster**, "The Amazing Race 7" will feature another familiar face—**Ron Young**, who was shot down in Iraq and held as a prisoner of war for 22 days. He will be racing with **Kelly McCorkley**, a former beauty queen whom he is currently dating.

They will be up against teams that include a mother and her son, a set of grandparents, and one half of a gay couple whose father is unaware of his sexual orientation. They travel around the world beginning at Lima, Peru, for a shot at winning $1 million, plus free Pit Stop holidays.

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SON OF THE MASK
BABY FEVER
hits Manila
Strong Word-of-Mouth has propelled SON OF THE MASK to the #1 spot in Manila

Alvey, the Son of the Mask

Strong Word-of-Mouth has propelled SON OF THE MASK to the #1 spot in Manila.

Friday figures almost tripled the boxoffice take of the first day. It was also the #1 movie in the UK when it opened last week ahead of the US release.

"It's MEET THE FOCKERS meets KUNG FU HUSTLE. It got slapstick humor and has the warmth of a family pic." says Gilbert Warton, New Line Cinema's head of publicity and distribution.

SON OF THE MASK is a unique film which offers plenty of things audiences have never seen before.

From **INDUSTRIAL LIGHT AND MAGIC**, the George Lucas owned company that did the effects for JURASSIC PARK, HARRY POTTER and STAR WARS series comes the most visually stunning movie of the year.

"Nobody's ever done this before, nobody's ever tried to make something as real as we wanted to make the baby look," says ILM's Erica Huggins. "We didn't just create a CG baby; we wanted a real baby in front of the camera. There's nothing as magical as seeing a baby look into the lens of a camera and smile or cry or have that glint in their eyes. You cannot reproduce the cuteness of a real baby. So the challenge for visual effects was to take something that exists in this world and to match it exactly."

ILM's Chief Visual Effects Supervisor James E. Price adds, "I think the average moviegoer is going to be thrilled at what they see because the change is so dramatic. You often don't know what to make of it when you first see it. Even I was shocked, because it's not something that you would expect to see. We were able to create some images that people haven't seen before... a 6 month year old baby that can tap dance, fly at the speed of light, and morph into different characters.

ADVT

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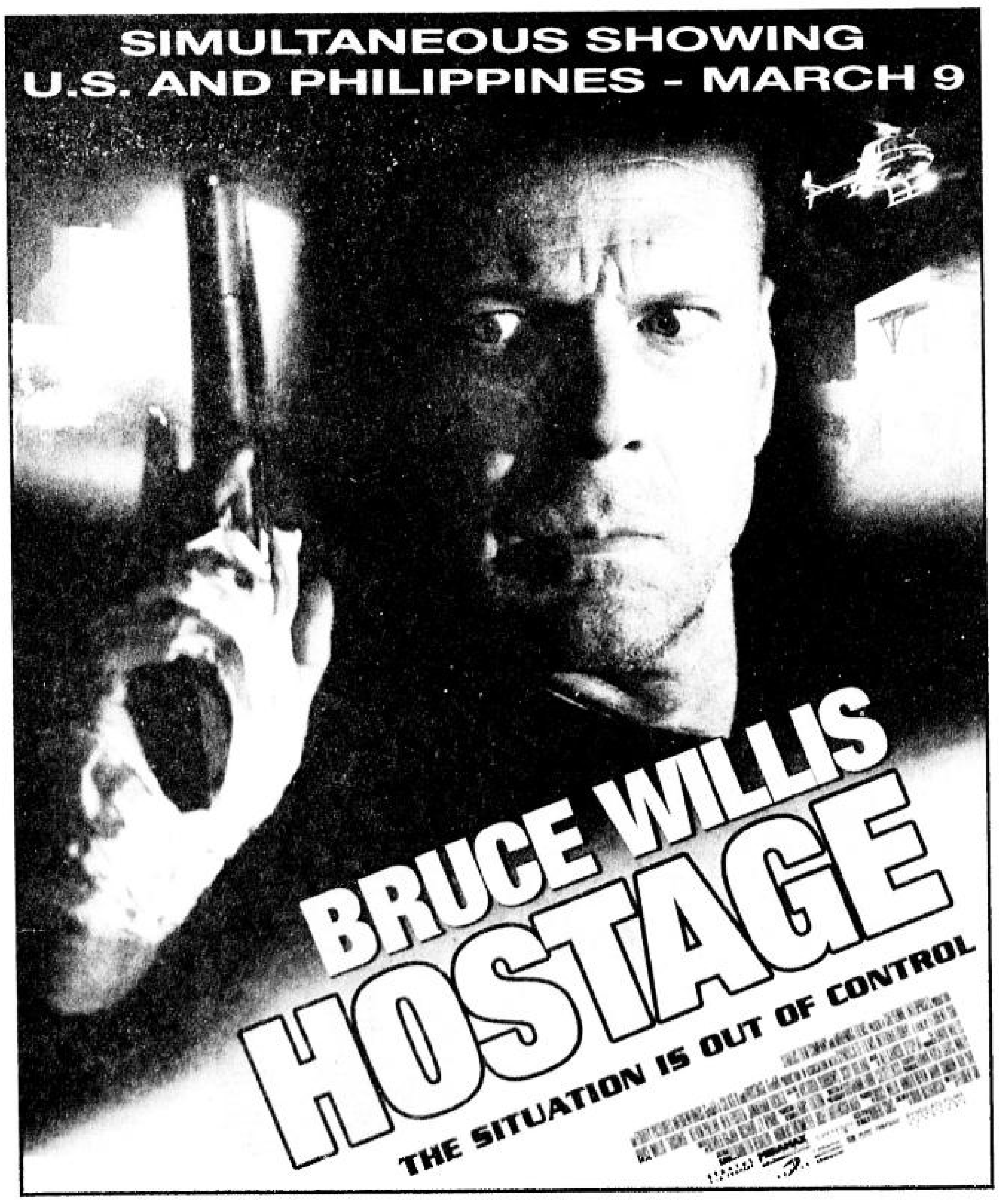
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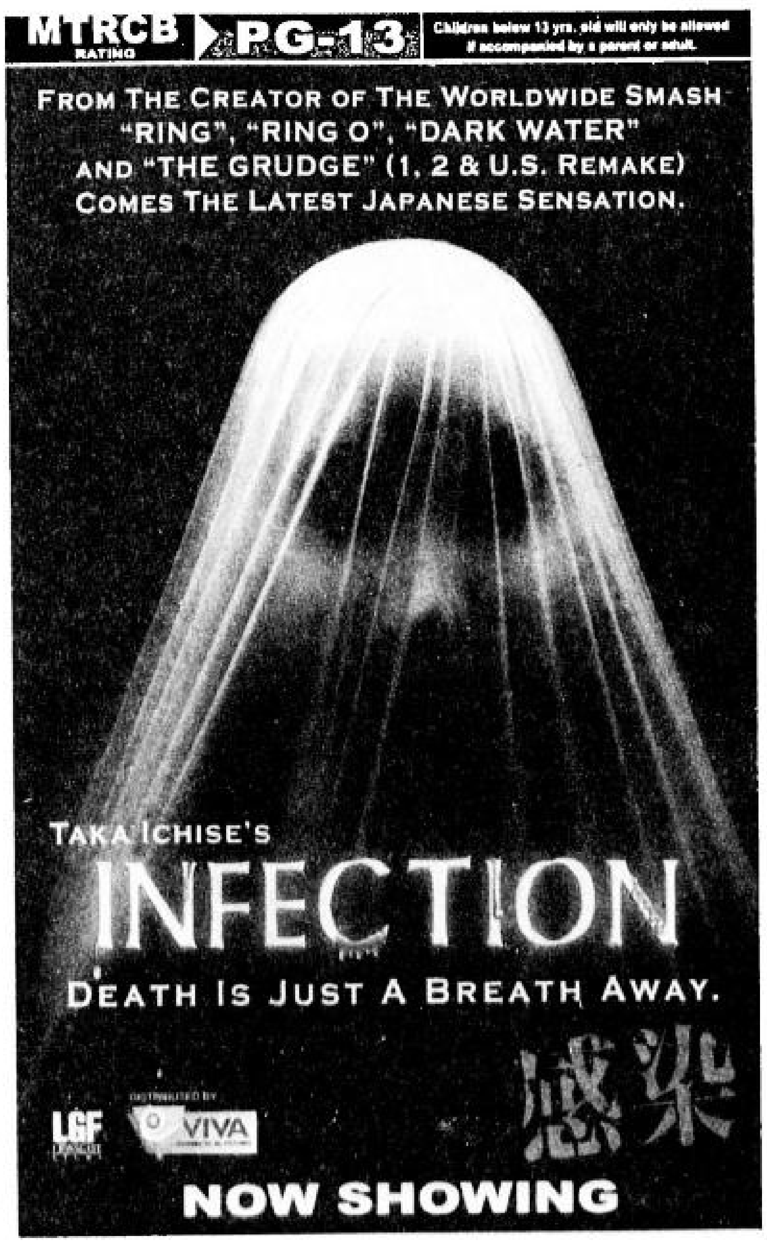
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Telesulit Subscriber	Free P300 worth of Load on existing Telesulit line	Free P150 worth of Load on existing Telesulit line

Note: *Credits/loads will automatically be credited to the account of the Goldmine Agent and will expire after one (1) month. Unused credits/loads will not be carried over to the succeeding month.*

4. To qualify for the cash prizes at the end of the promo period, Goldmine Agents should have at least fifty (50) approved and installed subscriptions. All qualified Goldmine Agents will be ranked according to the most number of approved applications and awarded the following:

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Ruby Category: Top 26 – 35	Php 50,000
Silver Category: Top 36 – 45	Php 20,000
Bronze Category: Top 46 – 55	Php 10,000
Pearl Category: Top 56 – 65	Php 5,000

5. Promo period is from January 10, 2005 to May 10, 2005. Deadline for submission of referrals with complete required documents is on May 10, 2005, 5:00pm.
6. Successful new applications credited to the account of the Goldmine Agent are non-transferable.
7. The Goldmine Agent is not an employee of PLDT. He is not authorized to collect money or any other monetary form from the telephone applicants.
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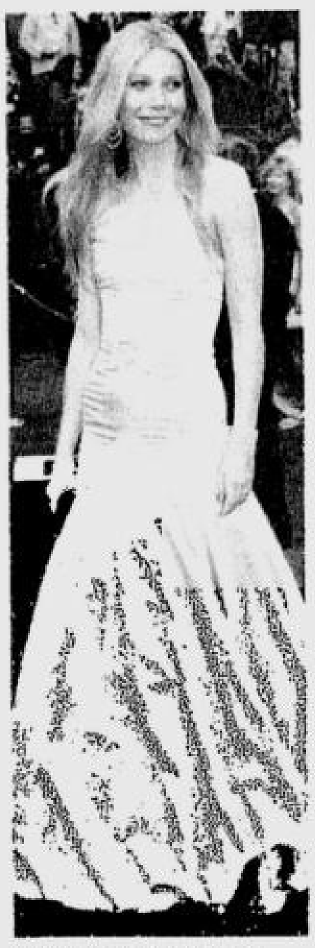
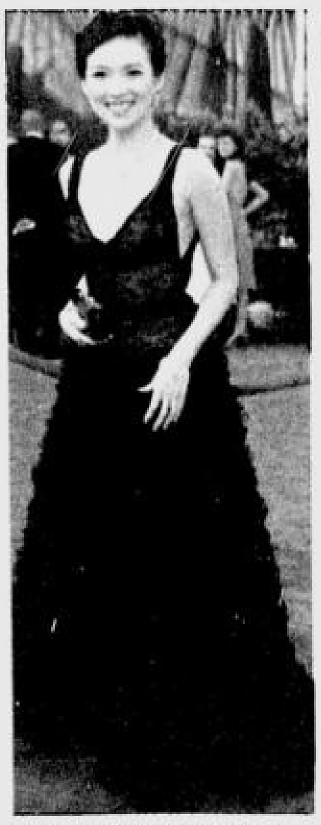
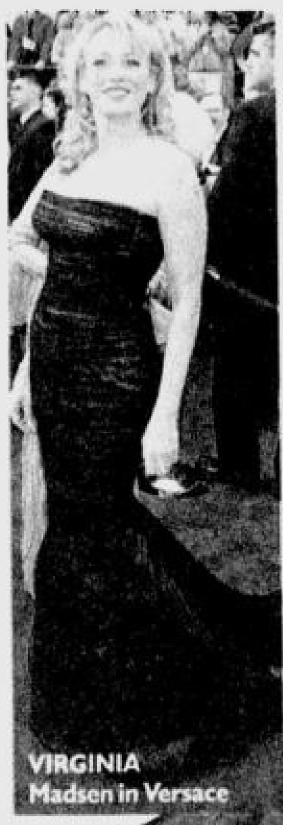
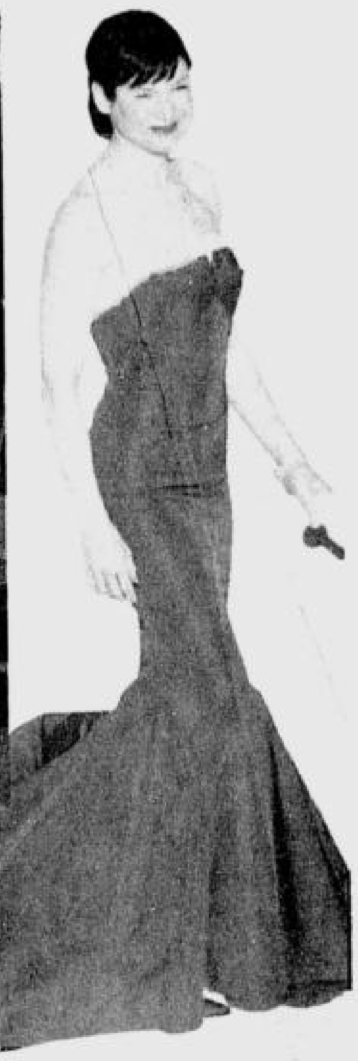

GWYNETH Paltrow in Stella McCartney


ZHANG ZIYI in Monique Lhuillier


VIRGINIA Madsen in Versace


RENÉE Zellweger in Carolina Herrera

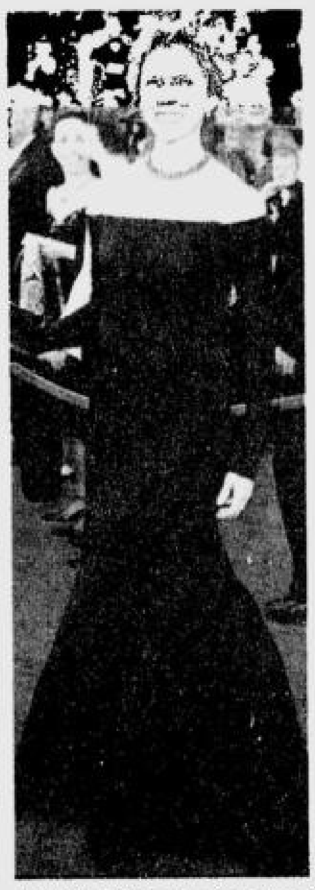
Best Actress in Full Body Shot

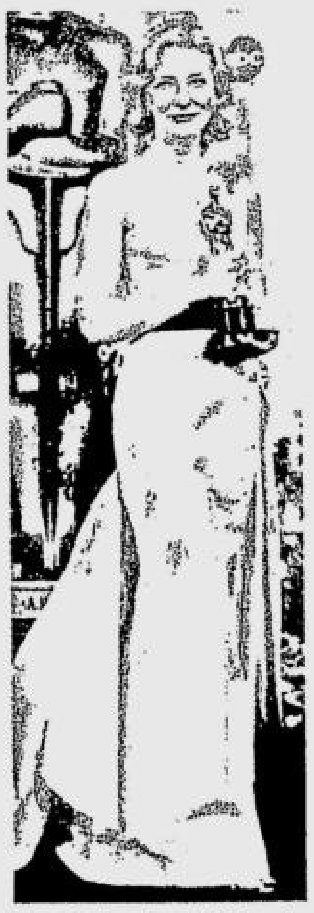
BLABBERMOUTH Oscars 2005 host Chris Rock, in his pre-program hysterics, summed up in four words the reason that he never watched previous Film Academy awards ceremonies: "It's a fashion show!"

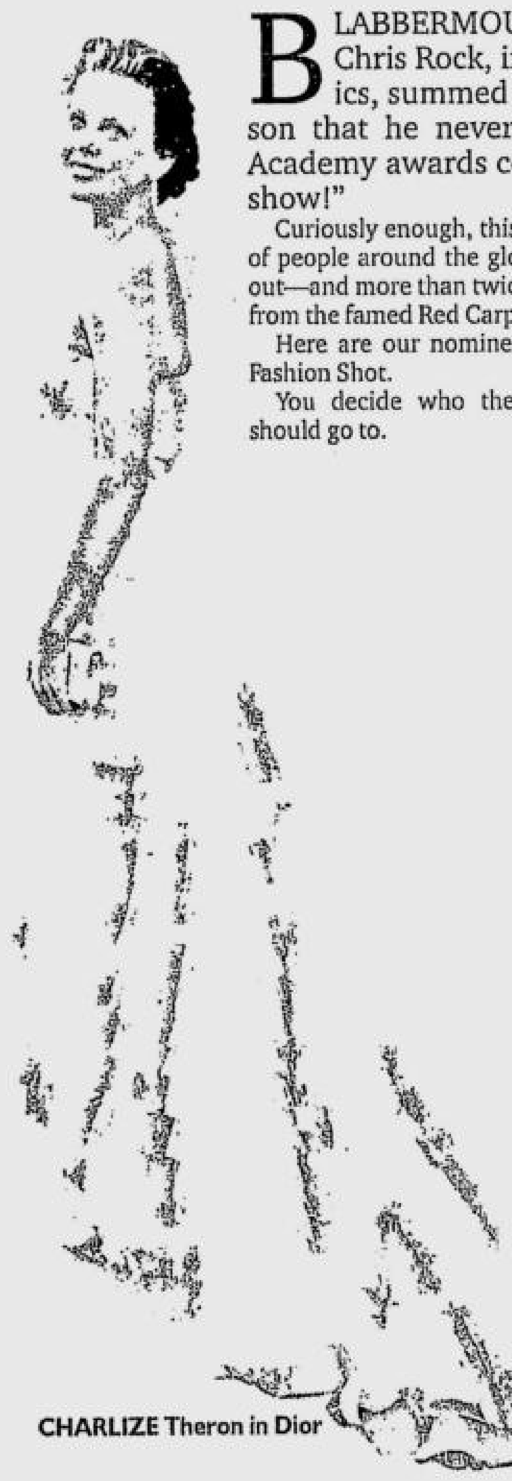
Curiously enough, this is the same reason that millions of people around the globe do watch it year in and year out—and more than twice over, counting replays, starting from the famed Red Carpet reception.

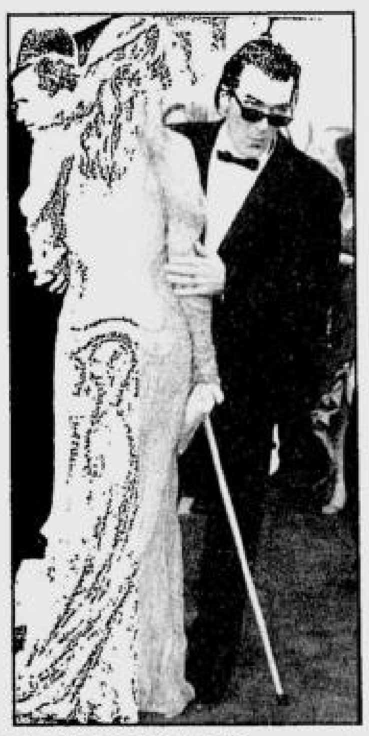
Here are our nominees for Best Actress in Full Body Fashion Shot.

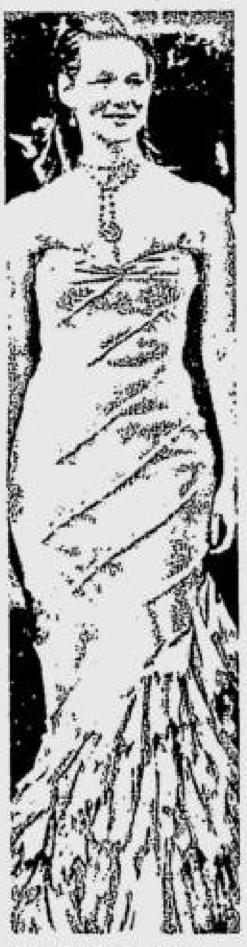
You decide who the Inquirer Entertainment Oscar should go to.


ANNETTE Bening in Armani


CATE Blanchett in Valentino


CHARLIZE Theron in Dior


MELANIE Griffith in Versace (with husband Antonio Banderas)


LAURA Linney in J. Mendel

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PLDT net profit surged to ₱28B in '04

By Clarissa S. Batino

TELECOM giant Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. yesterday reported a net profit of P28 billion on revenue of P115.2 billion for 2004, more than double the previous year's income and most beating most analysts' forecasts.

The record profit was driven by huge recurring income from its wireless operations and helped by a one-time gain of P2.8 billion from the consolidation of its mobile phone business.

PLDT declared a 10-percent cash dividend or P14 a share to its common shareholders on record until March 2005.

Taking out gains derived mostly from Smart Communications Inc's acquisition of discounted debts of Pilipino Telephone Corp., PLDT's net profit in 2004 of P25.17 billion still surpassed its twice-upgraded profit target of P24 billion and was 237 percent higher than an adjusted 2003 income of P7.5 billion.

PLDT chair Manuel V. Pangilinan said that ne w accounting standards, especially those pertaining to foreign exchange accounts, had made it harder to forecast financial results. A stable peso was most ideal, he added.

He said PLDT was the first Philippine company to adopt the new global accounting benchmarks ahead of schedule. The income in 2003 was adjusted from P11.2 billion.

"I would like to think we will achieve something like P27 billion for 2005. Having said that, I would like to caution that there is a great deal of difficulty in forecasting because of foreign exchange movements," the PLDT chair said.

Last year's relatively smooth peso-dollar rate

PLDT/ B3

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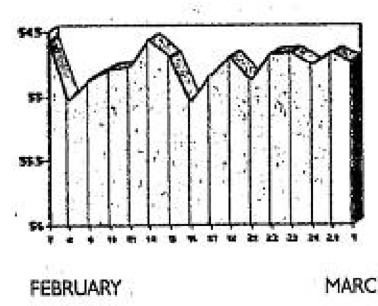

₱ 54.74 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., March 1, 2005

¥ 104.64 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., March 1, 2005

GOLD: $ 434.00-434.50
per ounce Hong Kong, March 1, 2005

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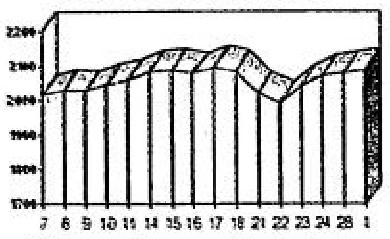
Shares close 0.43% higher

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



SHARE prices closed 0.43 percent higher yesterday in extended bargain-hunting boosted by strong 2004 profits from market heavyweight Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT), dealers said.

They said the market was consolidating and was expected to trade sideways for the next few sessions as most investors take a breather ahead of two major initial public offerings this month.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index rose 8.96 points to 2,088.95 after trading between 2,079.99 and 2,093.39.

Volume totaled 6.1 billion shares worth P1.4 billion from 5.3 billion shares worth P2.21 billion on Monday.

The broader all-shares index gained 2.11 points to 1,199.97.

Losers beat gainers 68 to 41, with 38 stocks unchanged.

Nestor Aguila of DA Market Securities said the market was consolidating after recent volatility, but that the bias remained positive.

"This trend will likely continue in the coming session. We'll see the index consolidating above the 2,000 level," Aguila said.

Dominant carrier PLDT announced just before the close of trading Tuesday that its 2004 net profit more than doubled to P28 billion, beating analyst forecasts for P22-25 billion.

PLDT was the most actively traded stock, rising P15 at P1,395 on

SHARES/ B2

Smart, Piltel to join price war

ADMITTING that competition was altered with the entry of buffet pricing for mobile services, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. chair Manuel V. Pangilinan said that PLDT's wireless units would have no choice but to join the price war.

"There is a market segment developing. If that is what the market wants, then Smart will participate in that. We would tap into this new voice market of unlimited pricing," Pangilinan said dur-

SMART/ B3

Total gov't debt balloons to ₱3.81B

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL government's debt has reached P3.81 trillion as of end-December 2004 as it continued to resort to borrowings to fund expenditures that could not be accommodated by its scant revenue collection.

When divided among the country's estimated 84 million population, each Filipino already has a P45,380 share in the government's debt burden.

The latest debt figure was equivalent to 78.7 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) for 2004. It was also 0.3-percent higher than the P3.8 trillion recorded in November, and reflected a 13.6-percent increase from the end-2003 level.

The latest debt figure still did not include the national government's contingent liabilities amounting to P833.7 billion.

Contingent liabilities are the borrowings of state-owned companies-guaranteed by the national government.

The Department of Finance reported that of the P3.81-trillion accumulated borrowings as of end-December, 52.5 percent, or about P2 trillion, came from domestic sources. The remaining 47.5 percent, or P1.8 trillion, were sourced from foreign creditors.

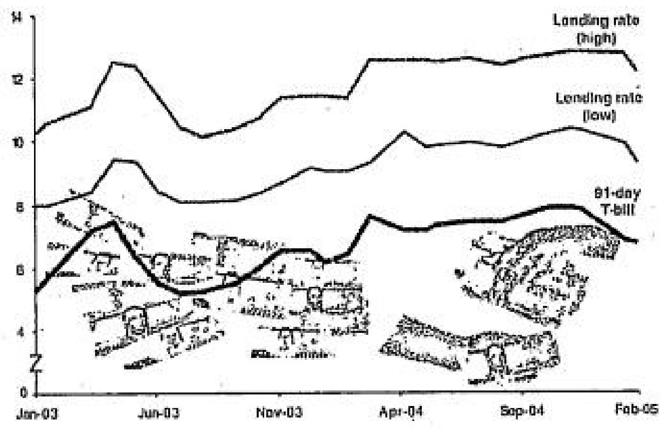
The amount of domestic debt was 17.5-percent higher than what was recorded in December 2003, while the latest foreign

TOTAL/ B3

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

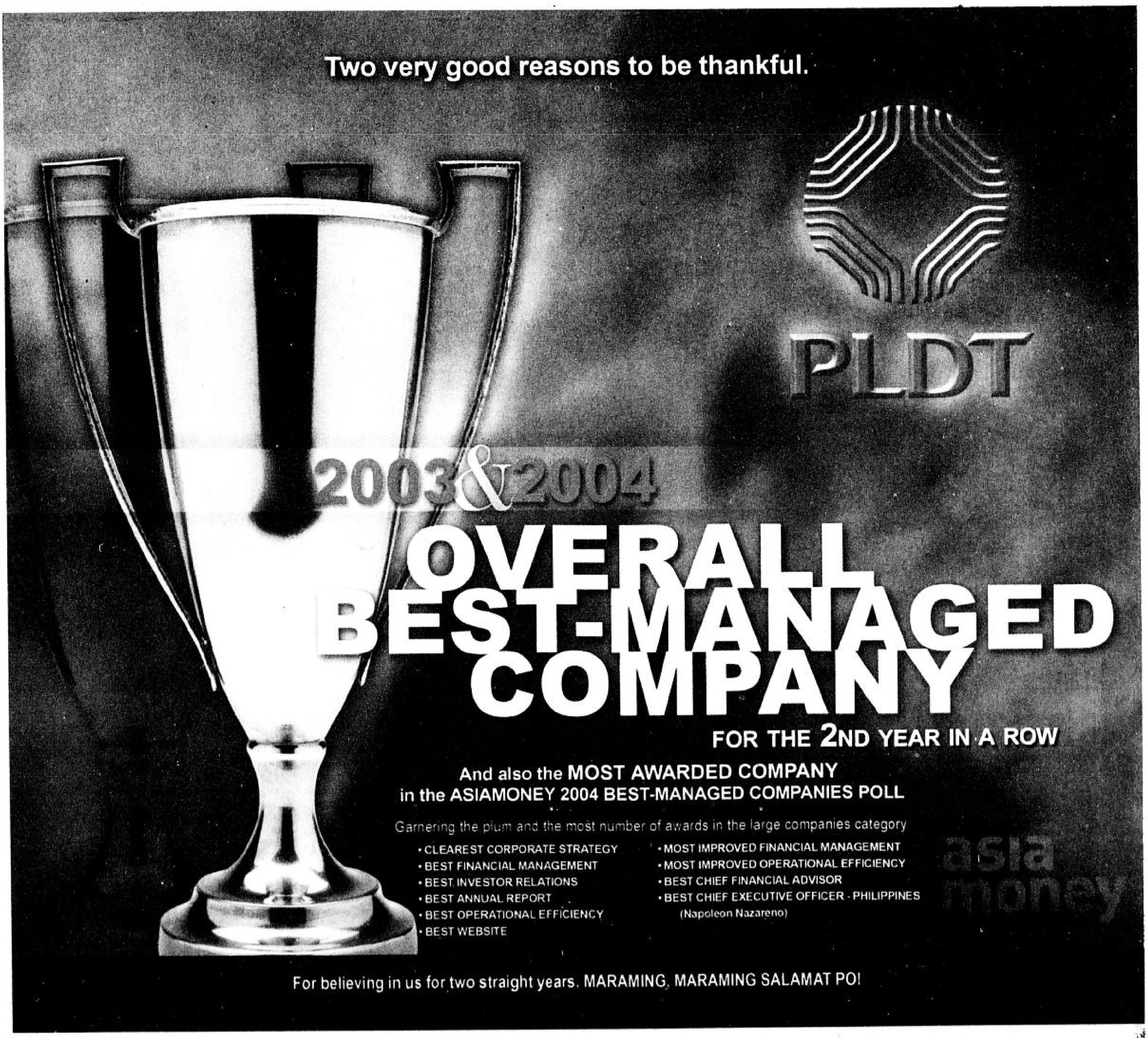
Average monthly T- bill and lending rates
(January 2003 to February 2005)



Source of basic data: Technistock

THE 91-day treasury bill rates have not hit double figures since 2001. Last year, it averaged 7.3 percent. Lending rates of commercial banks were 2 to 6 percentage points higher than the treasury bill rates.

Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research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SMC sets stock rights offer price

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SAN Miguel Corp., Southeast Asia's biggest food and beverage firm, is estimated to raise roughly P17.8 billion from the sale of additional shares from treasury by the end of this month after it set the price for these shares yesterday.

The long-awaited stock rights offering is aimed at generating funds for the company's ambitious bid to become one of Asia-Pacific's top 10 companies in the next three years.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, San Miguel said it would issue 173.4 million class "A" shares at P54.70 each (approximately P9.48 billion), and 111.2 million class "B" shares at P74.74 a share (or roughly P8.31 billion)

Francis Jardeleza, senior vice president and general counsel for San Miguel, told the PSE that the prices set for the company's stock rights offering were based on a 5-percent discount to the average closing price of San Miguel from Jan. 28 to Feb. 24. .

Before any discount was applied, the average closing prices for the rights shares for the period were at P57.58 for "A" shares, which are available only to Filipino investors, and P78.68 for "B" shares, which are open to both foreign and local investors.

The additional shares to be issued represent roughly 10 percent or 284.6 million shares out of San Miguel's 2.846 billion total outstanding shares.

The offer period for the shares will end on Mar. 31.

San Miguel has set March 7 as the record date for the stock rights offering, which means stockholders on the company's stock and transfer books as of that date will qualify for the offering.

Seen as a move to preserve the value of the coconut farmers' share in San Miguel, President Macapagal-Arroyo had said that the government would take part in the food conglomerate's $300-million stock rights offering using money from government financial institutions (GFIs).

The government has a 41-percent stake in San Miguel.

Shares

From page B1

141,390 shares worth P197.7 million.

Manila Electric Co.'s "B" shares, available to foreign investors, rose P1 to P32 while its "A" shares, limited to local investors, were up 50 centavos at P19.50.

PLDT's mobile phone unit, Pilipino Telephone Corp, gained 10 centavos to P3.70.

Ayala Corp was up 30 centavos to P8.30, while its Ayala Land Inc. unit fell 30 centavos to P9.10.

Benpres Holdings Corp fell four centavos to P1.30, while Globe Telecom was up P10 at P945 and SM Prime Holdings fell 10 centavos to P8.50. *AFP*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 1, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	50,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	29	30	29	30	1,135,800
Bank of the Phil. Islands	57.5	58.5	57.5	58.5	856,400
China Banking Corp.	685	695	685	695	1,530
Chinatrust Comm. Bank	18	18	18	18	1,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	47.5	48	47.5	48	29,800
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.89	0.9	0.85	0.86	7,920,000
International Exch. Bank	18.5	18.5	18.5	18.5	348,300
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	38	38	37	37.5	1,070,100
Philippine National Bank	32	32	31.5	31.5	26,400
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	1,500
Security Bank Corp.	31.5	31.5	31	31	117,100
Union Bank of the Phil.	29	29.5	29	29	66,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1	1	1	1	10,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	260	260	260	260	5,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	2450	2450	2450	2450	140
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	2.1	2.14	2	2.14	119,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	135	135	135	135	10,300
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1740	1745	1740	1745	230
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	18	18.5	18	18.25	105,400
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.5	1.56	1.46	1.54	15,150,000
Easycall Phils. Inc.-Com	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	7,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	940	945	940	945	58,820
Ipeople Inc.	4.8	4.8	4.75	4.75	145,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.0575	0.0575	4,500,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0725	0.0725	0.065	0.0675	63,300,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	70,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.16	2.16	2.16	2.16	23,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.6	3.8	3.55	3.7	19,961,000
Transpacific Broadcast	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	50,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1380	1405	1380	1395	141,390
Ivantage Corp.	0.75	0.79	0.73	0.76	56,540,000
Philweb Corp.	0.026	0.026	0.022	0.022	767,900,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	19.25	20	19.25	19.5	366,800
Manila Electric Co. B	31.5	32.5	31.5	32	4,551,800
Petron Corp.	3.95	4.2	3.95	4.1	10,680,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.38	2.38	2.38	2.38	10,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.5	1.5	1.44	1.44	669,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.96	1.98	1.96	1.98	110,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.82	1.82	1.76	1.76	19,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	8.2	8.2	8	8.1	499,000
Keppel Phils. Marine, Inc.	0.54	0.56	0.54	0.56	120,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.06	1.06	1	1	196,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	860,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.6	4.6	4.4	4.4	1,612,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.4	200,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.95	3.95	3.85	3.9	96,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	29.5	29.5	29.5	29.5	539,100
RFM Corp.	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92	200,000
San Miguel Corp. A	56.5	56.5	56	56.5	44,100
San Miguel Corp. B	79.5	79.5	79	79.5	154,200
Vitarich Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.29	520,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.011	53,500,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	17,000,000
Ayala Corp.	8.1	8.3	8.1	8.3	7,677,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.6	0.6	0.59	0.59	670,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.6	4.8	4.6	4.8	807,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.0575	0.0575	0.049	0.0525	47,400,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.98	1.98	1.96	1.98	202,000
APC Group Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.46	0.47	4,910,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	496,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	50,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.6	1.6	21,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	72,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.87	30,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	21.5	22	21.5	22	108,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.175	0.18	3,880,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.36	1.4	1.28	1.3	47,584,000
A Brown Co. Inc.	0.96	1.1	0.96	1.1	330,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.24	0.25	0.24	0.24	6,270,000
CADP Group Corp.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	30,000
Crown Equities, Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	1,350,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.61	0.61	0.6	0.6	520,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	4.05	4.25	4.05	4.25	2,753,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.06	0.06	0.0575	0.06	6,700,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	10.5	10.5	10	10	1,632,600
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	57.5	58	57	57	464,100
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	640,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.115	0.12	24,140,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.76	1.76	1,048,000
Ionics Inc.	1.76	1.76	1.74	1.74	53,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	124,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.12	2.12	2.02	2.02	535,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.66	1.66	2,137,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	110,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	450,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.61	0.62	0.58	0.59	42,270,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.37	0.37	1,150,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.22	1.22	1.22	1.22	7,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.36	0.36	0.35	0.35	240,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1	1.04	1	1.04	150,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.59	0.6	0.59	0.6	1,160,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	2,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.21	0.22	0.18	0.19	11,170,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.36	0.38	1,120,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Active Alliance Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	210,000
Matsushita Elec Phil Corp.	8	8	8	8	3,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.78	1.78	1.7	1.7	123,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.94	0.95	0.92	0.95	1,300,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.165	0.175	0.15	0.15	13,240,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.52	1.6	5,639,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.2	1.2	1,596,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.58	1.64	1.56	1.58	19,311,000
Manila Jockey Club	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	5,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.4	0.4	2,610,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp.(Pdr)	17.5	18	17.5	17.75	1,761,800
ATS Corp. - Preferred	3	3	3	3	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series P	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	9.3	9.4	9	9.1	5,895,000
Cityland Development Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	52,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.95	1.04	0.95	1	7,860,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.33	2,340,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.37	0.39	0.36	0.36	20,360,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.54	0.54	0.52	0.52	5,990,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.8	1.82	1.76	1.76	4,939,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	700,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	1,710,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78	260,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	240,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.21	0.21	0.19	0.19	2,360,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	650,000
SM Development Corp.	1.9	2	1.74	1.92	1,089,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.6	8.6	8.5	8.5	6,429,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	1.14	1.14	1.06	1.06	190,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.22	1.22	1.18	1.18	22,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.013	135,200,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	6.9	7.1	6.6	6.6	472,000
Benguet Corp. A	8.5	8.8	8.5	8.8	25,000
Benguet Corp. B	15	15	15	15	100
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.42	0.43	0.4	0.4	22,670,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co B	0.47	0.47	0.45	0.45	67,810,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.022	0.022	0.02	0.02	150,500,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.029	0.03	0.028	0.028	210,100,000
Omico Corp.	0.0085	0.01	0.0085	0.009	3,037,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.22	1.24	1.2	1.2	1,540,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.52	1.54	1.46	1.46	21,010,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	44	45	44	45	362,800
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.35	0.35	0.32	0.32	530,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.017	0.018	0.016	0.016	34,100,000
Interport Res. B	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	4,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0075	0.0085	0.0075	0.008	258,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	88,000,000
Pacifica	0.017	0.019	0.016	0.017	197,100,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.9	2.9	2.75	2.75	72,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.24	0.25	0.23.	0.23	28,740,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.44	0.48	0.42	0.42	2,550,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	11,768,600	149,731,480.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,781,665,310	980,851,245.00
PRO	60,874,000	140,852,780.00
Mining	3,647,431,900	132,816,430.00
OIL	612,562,000	15,019,100.00
GRAND TOTALS :	6,114,301,810	1,419,271,035.00
	AVERAGES	
Bank & Fin Svc	629.28	UP 1.56
Comm'l & Ind'l	3,223.51	UP 31.17
PRO	829.49	DOWN 19.27
Mining	3,601.84	DOWN 72.65
OIL	3.22	UP 0.15
SME	100.00	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	1,199.97	UP 2.11
Composite	2,088.95	UP 8.96

NO. OF ADVANCES: 41, NO. OF DECLINES: 68, NO. OF UNCHANGED: 38, NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 147, NO. OF TRADES: 6,607

DISCLOSURES

ARIES Prime Resources Inc. denied having any information relating to the unusual price movement of their shares in the market.

***

SAN Miguel Corp. issued price for preemptive rights offering equivalent to P54.70 per share for Class A common shares and P74.74 per share to Class B common shares. It also submitted the details of the capital structure as of Jan. 31 to the exchange.

***

ABS-CBN Holdings Corp. announced the reduction on its Philippine Deposits Receipts (PDR) today to a total of 270,194,800 PDRs.

***

JOLLIBEE Foods Corp. announced that a total 553,516 shares were exercised and fully paid under the Company's Stock Option Plan, bringing the Treasury shares to a total of 30,892,855 shares.

***

A BROWN Co. Inc. bought 280,000 BRN shares at P0.95 per share last Feb 24.

***

CITYLAND Development Corp. announced the increased in sales of more than 10 percent on a monthly and quarterly year-on-year basis.

Compiled by Chona Galang, PDI Research

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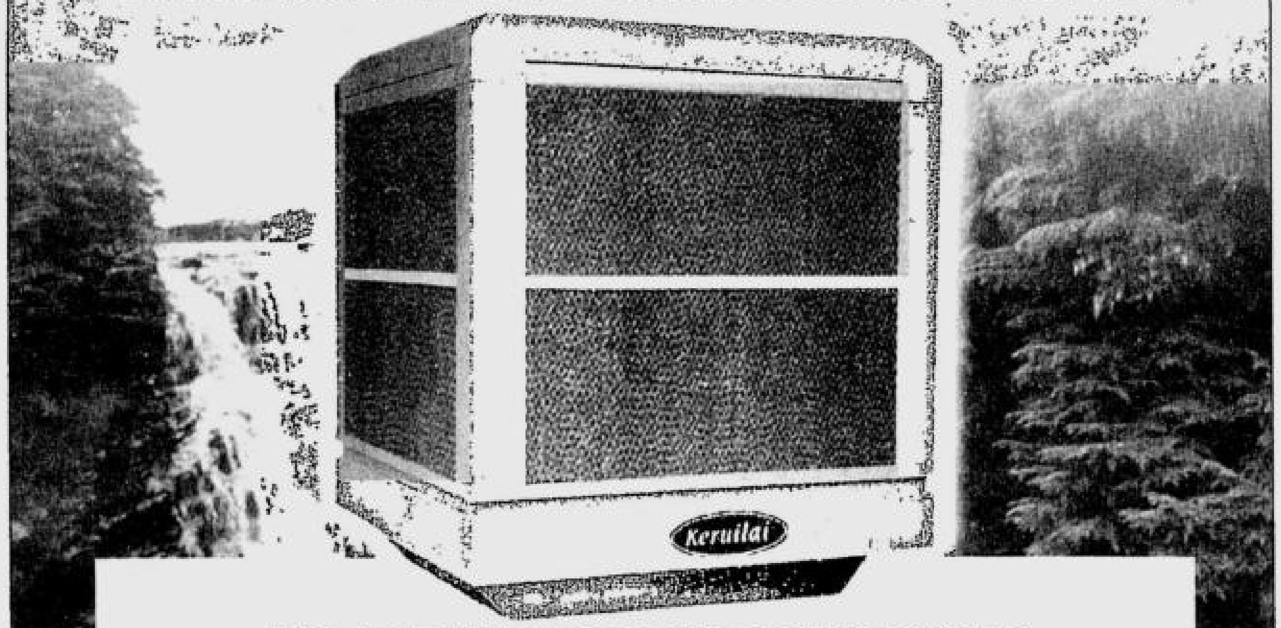

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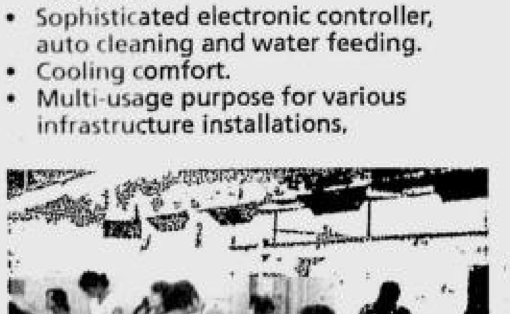

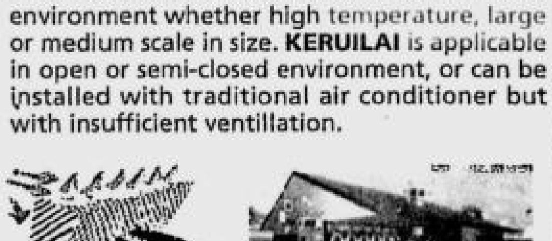

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Still GMA-resistant

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

FOUR years have passed since Edsa II, but the Ateneo classmates of Joseph Estrada seem to still smart from their most famous classmate having been driven out of Malacañang by Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

In the Malacañang luncheon tendered Monday by GMA to mark the Manila Rotary Club's centennial celebration, former Customs Commissioner Ricardo Ampil, an immediate past Rotary president, was a no-show.

Also, members of the Ateneo High School Class 1955 and active Rotarians like Antonio Lopa, Cipriano Reyes of Central Colleges of the Philippines, Jesus Pineda and former SBMA Administrator Felicito Payumo were prominently missing from the Malacañang luncheon.

Payumo, when reached, did not wish to add to the speculative fire, saying GMA had originally been invited by the Rotary first to their Feb. 24 ball to mark the club's 100th year.

But with GMA having declined the original Rotary invitation, a number of Rotarians invited to the Monday make-up luncheon with GMA had already made prior commitments, and thus were unable to attend, Payumo explained, before the line purposely went static.

The Arroyo factor

THERE has been so far only one declared candidate for the chairmanship of the Philippine Stock Exchange, and that is none other than the incumbent, Ma. Alicia Rita-Arroyo.

Still, according to the grapevine, GSIS chair Bernardino Abes, who would inherit the PSE board seat of GSIS president Winston Garcia, has indicated he would abstain from voting for the next PSE chair.

Reason? Abes does not want to be caught in the still burbling dispute between the wife of Jose Pidal and her former "mentor," Ma. Vivian Yuchengco.

According to the grapevine, not only is Yuchengco a short-listed GSIS broker, but her frequent golf games with Mike Arroyo are something not to be taken lightly.

Yuchengco herself has issued a press statement that she is not interested in the chairmanship, a position she had held immediately before Ms Arroyo, but that apparently had done little to dissuade Abes, a former Malacañang legislative liaison officer, from his fence-sitting position.

Money-go-round

- AYALA Land senior vice president Miriam Katigbak more than doubled her money in less than three weeks after she disposed of more than two million ALI shares at P9.10 to P9.30 a share, a block she acquired earlier this month through the company's stock option plan.
- LUFTHANSA is dropping the Bangkok stopover in the Manila-Frankfurt flight in favor of Guangzhou beginning March 28.
- TODAY president/CEO Jose Galang Jr. has tendered his resignation to pave the way for the Standard-Today merger. The merged paper will be called, what else but, "Manila Standard Today."

Heard through the grapevine

THE BIGGEST duty-dodging importer is no longer a certain Lucio, but a certain Thomas, also with a monosyllabic surname. This Thomas' secret weapon happens to be his sister Vicky.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

PLDT net . . .

From page B1

reduced the group's foreign exchange losses to P2.7 billion against P9 billion in 2003.

Smart's listed unit, Pilipino Telephone Corp., also announced a net income of P9.8 billion in 2004, reversing the P3.4 billion in losses the previous year.

Without the one-time adjustments due to its improved revenue-sharing deal with parent firm Smart, Piltel's profit last year stood at P4.9 billion.

An omnibus deal forged with Smart last year allowed Piltel to retain 80 percent of its revenue even as it uses the parent firm's network and avails itself of Smart's management expertise.

Smart and Piltel ended 2004 with 19.2 million subscribers, accounting for 58 percent of the cellular phone market. Smart added 4.5 million customers and Piltel's Talk N' Text attracted another 1.7 million to end last year with 14.6 million and 4.6 million users, respectively.

Smart now owns 86.5 percent of Piltel and is in the process of acquiring the remaining 6.5 percent stake of PLDT. Once this is completed, Smart would own 92 percent of Piltel.

By the end of the year, Smart would have completed its acquisition of Meridian Telekoms Inc., a high-speed Internet provider previously owned by the family of Mark Jimenez.

Of PLDT's P115.2 billion in revenue, P48.5 billion came from the fixed-line business. "The fixed-line is showing some signs of strength and vitality," Pangilinan said.

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US EXPERT ON ORTHODONTICS VISITS RP

THE Association of Philippine Orthodontics recently held its 4th National Orthodontic Congress with the theme "Orthodontics Simplified ... Empowering Our Basic Biomechanics." The participants learned the basic knowledge in biomechanics and treatment planning. One of the distinguished guest speaker was Dr. Tom Mulligan, author and proponent of Common Sense Mechanics. He has been lecturing worldwide for the past 35 years on moving molars and teeth without the help of oral appliances and with minimal patient cooperation. He is an active member of the American Association of Orthodontists, Pacific Coast Society of Orthodontists, ABO College of Diplomates, Arizona State Ortho Society, and American Dental Society. Photo (L-R) Dr. Jojo de Leon, chairman of trade exhibits; Dr. Sandy Adriano, president of APO 2004-2006; Ms. Emily Abrera, inspirational guest speaker; Dr. Crissie Santayana, president of APO 2002-2004.
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iVantage sells stake in IT firm

COMMUNICATION firm iVantage Corp. said its board has approved the sale of its 20-percent stake in Nexus Technologies Inc. for P41.16 million.

It said in a disclosure yesterday that its board authorized management to dispose of all of iVantage's equity in Nexus totaling 178,970 shares. It did not disclose further details.

iVantage, formerly known as Vantage Equities Inc., was organized primarily to engage in oil and gas exploration. In 1997, the company changed its primary purpose to financial holdings and investments. Since then, the board recommended a change in the corporation's name to Vantage Equities.

However, in 2000, the company amended its primary purpose to communication as well as changed its name to iVantage Corp. in lieu of its new purpose of including investments in information technology companies and other related ventures.

During the same year, the company acquired 100 percent of the common stock of E-Business Services Inc., a company involved in E-commerce payment, and 51 percent of the common stock of Lucky Star Communications Network Inc., a company involved in network design consulting and implementation. In 2001, iVantage incorporated I-Remit Inc., an online remittance company. ***Elizabeth L. Sanchez***

Total gov't debt . . .

From page B1

debt figure translated to a 9.7-percent year-on-year increase.

Of the total debt, 15.6 percent represented borrowings maturing in the short term, 27.4 percent over the medium term, and 57 percent in the long term.

The DOF said the higher domestic borrowings, compared with foreign, was in line with the policy of limiting the government's exposure to foreign exchange risks.

"The country's debt burden continues to be one of the biggest challenges that the national government faces. We have one of the biggest debt-to-GDP ratios in the world, and it's about time that we strongly address this lingering issue," newly appointed Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima said in a statement.

The finance chief said the government, through the DOF, would continue pursuing both legislative and administrative measures to strengthen its revenue collection. Administrative measures include privatization of government assets and enhancement of the auditing capacities of the bureaus of Internal Revenue and of Customs. Legislative measures, on the other hand, include tax proposals such as the increase in the value-added tax from 10 to 12 percent.

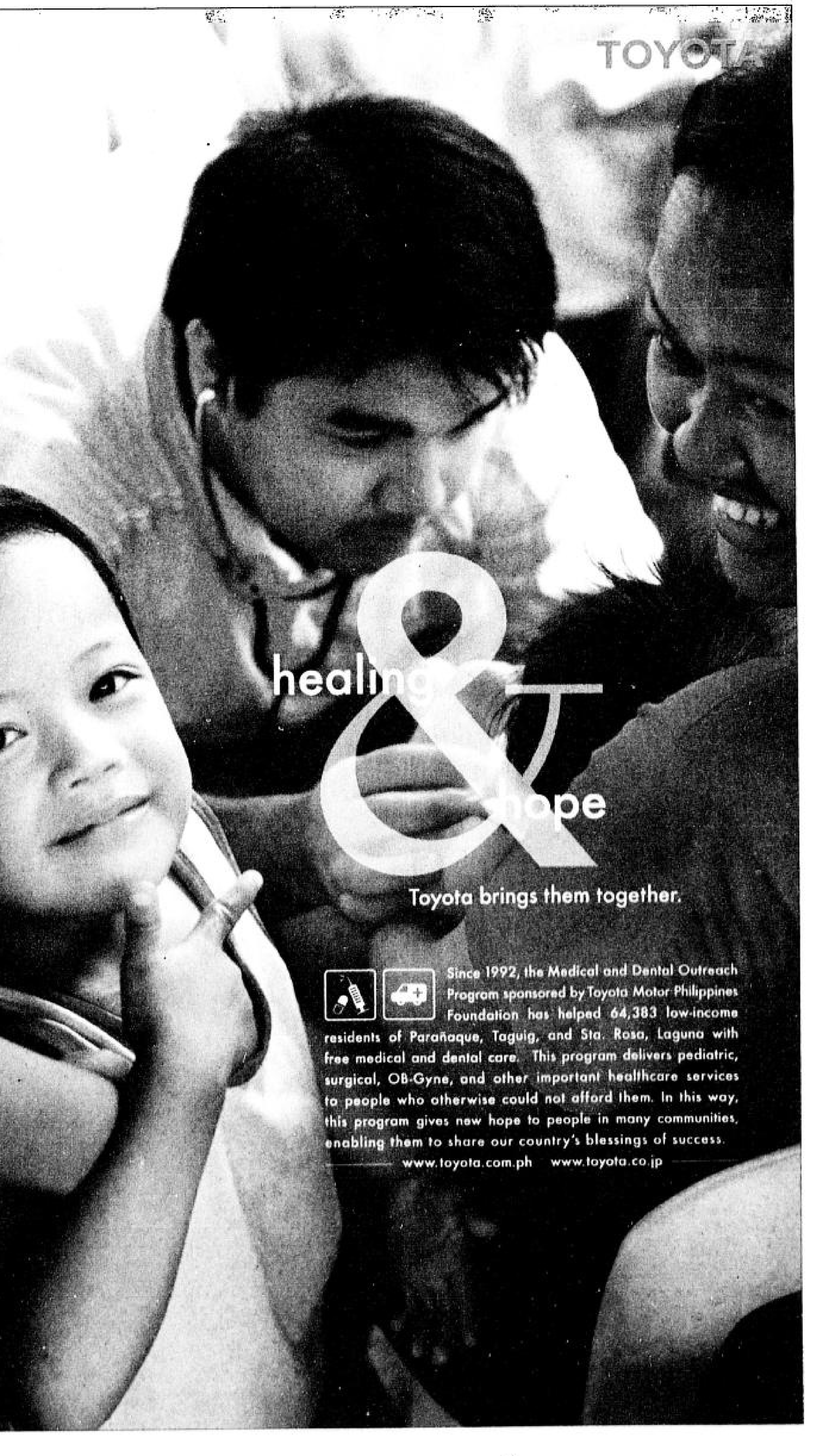
The government is targeting to raise more revenue and post a zero budget deficit on or before 2010. The budget deficit for 2004 hit P186.1 billion. For 2005, the deficit is expected to be a little lower at P180 billion.

Purisima said the Arroyo administration's proposed measures were geared toward reducing the government's debt burden.

"Let me add, however, that we will only explore legitimate measures in debt reduction. Talks of debt repudiation are counterproductive," Purisima said. The finance chief stressed that the country has to keep its credit image in the international community to avoid eroding investor confidence.

CURRENCIES

March 1, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.755572	1.000000	54.6850
Japan	Yen	0.007226	0.009563	0.5230
United Kingdom	Pound	1.452210	1.922000	105.1046
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.096881	0.128222	7.0118
Switzerland	Franc	0.650402	0.860807	47.0732
Canada	Dollar	0.612543	0.810701	44.3332
Singapore	Dollar	0.465914	0.616637	33.7208
Australia	Dollar	0.599566	0.793525	43.3939
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.004224	2.652590	145.0569
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.201486	0.266667	14.5827
Brunei	Dollar	0.464482	0.614742	33.6172
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000082	0.000108	0.0059
Thailand	Baht	0.019754	0.026144	1.4297
UAE	Dirham	0.205710	0.272257	14.8884
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.323500	72.3756
Argentina	Peso	0.258094	0.341588	18.6797
Brazil	Real	0.292370	0.386952	21.1605
Denmark	Kroner	0.134372	0.177841	9.7252
India	Rupee	0.017342	0.022952	1.2551
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.198861	0.263193	14.3927
Mexico	New Peso	0.068100	0.090131	4.9288
New Zealand	Dollar	0.550227	0.728226	39.8230
Norway	Kroner	0.121590	0.160924	8.8001
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012737	0.016858	0.9219
South Africa	Rand	0.130722	0.173010	9.4611
Korea	Won	0.000751	0.000994	0.0544
Sweden	Kroner	0.110433	0.146158	7.9927
Syria	Pound	0.014555	0.019264	1.0535
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024326	0.032196	1.7606
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000394	0.000522	0.0285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Malay-RP joint venture bags oil, gas contract

By Abigail L. Ho

FOR THE fifth time since the Supreme Court ruled that the Philippine Mining Act was constitutional three months ago, the Department of Energy awarded a petroleum service contract to a Filipino-Malaysian consortium, Phil-Mal Petroenergy Corp. for the exploration of oil and gas in southern Cebu.

Service Contract (SC) 49 which was awarded yesterday would cover 265,000 hectares in the Visayan basin, a location the DOE had ranked high in the petroleum resources scale.

Proof of this is that two recently awarded petroleum service contracts, SC 44 to Singapore Gas to Grid Pte. Ltd., and SC 46 to Japan Petroleum Exploration Co. Ltd., are located in the Visayan basin.

SC 44 involves oil and gas exploration in central Cebu, while SC 46 entails exploration over the Tanon Straits in Negros Occidental.

Under SC 49, Phil-Mal will invest $2.15 million for the conduct of geological and geophysical studies over the area. This amount likewise covers the drilling of one well during the first two years of the seven-year exploration period and another four wells during the second and third phases of exploration.

"The signing of yet another service contract in less than a week highlights the growing momentum in the upstream petroleum industry in the country," Energy Secretary Vincent Perez said in a statement yesterday. "I hope that this momentum will further gain acceleration to bring us closer to our goal of energy independence through increased development of our indigenous energy resources."

Just last week, the DOE awarded five coal exploration and development contracts covering various locations in the Visayas and Mindanao to three local mining firms.

Two contracts were signed with MG Mining and Energy Corp., a subsidiary of fuel and energy trading firm Murphy Group, for the exploration and development of coal resources in South Cotabato and in the southern part of Cebu.

Two other contracts were awarded to Forum Exploration Inc., the local arm of Canadian firm Forum Energy Corp., for exploration activities at the Balamban-Naga and Dalaguete coal fields in Cebu.

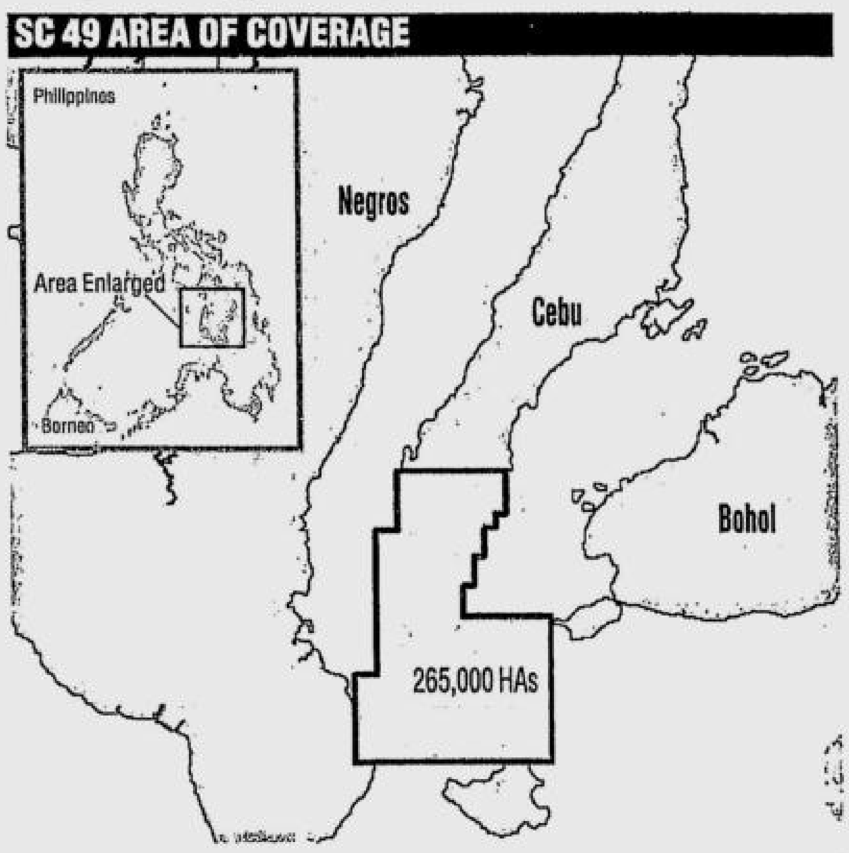
The fifth contract, which involved the right to explore and develop coal resources in Diplahan-Buug, Zamboanga Sibugay, was awarded to Philex Mining Corp.

SC 49 is the fifth petroleum service contract awarded over the last three months and the seventh over a span of 15 months.

Perez said $45 million in new investments were expected to pour in from the new contracts.

Datuk Wong Kie Nai, Phil-Mal chair of the Malaysian component of the consortium, said the firm would be supporting the government's thrust toward energy self-sufficiency by engaging in more oil and gas exploration activities in the future.

SC 49 AREA OF COVERAGE



Investment firm plays down LBC complaint

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

ATR KIM Eng Capital Partners Inc. (ATR KE Capital) is playing down the complaint the LBC Group has filed against the investment house, saying that its actions had been cleared by the board of TPG Corp. before it tapped the funds of the pre-need firm.

In a complaint filed with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, courier service provider LBC Group accused ATR KE Capital of misusing the trust fund of the pre-need firm TPG Corp. by hiring a group of architects to develop a property in Davao.

The pre-need firm owns the title to the 1,000-square-meter property in Davao. TPG Corp. intended to put up its southern headquarters on the property.

ATR KE Capital is an investment house with authority from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to act as trustee of a portion of the trust funds of TPG.

ATR KE Capital said the complaint referred to a 2001 transaction on behalf of the TPG Trust Fund. The deal called for the hiring of architects to prepare a study on the Davao property.

The investment house said it engaged the services of the architect "with the approval" of the TPG board, according to ATR KE Financial, the parent firm of ATR KE Capital, in its disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE).

"The complaint deals with the engagement of an excellent team of three architects from Harvard University in 2001 to undertake a best use study intended to enhance the value of a property in Davao's Central Business District owned by the TPG Trust Fund," ATR KE Capital said in a statement. "The [cost of the] study project ... and the hiring of the team of architects was decided by the TPG Board.

ATR KE Capital said Carlos Araneta was TPG chairman of the board at that time.

Araneta is head of the LBC Group. The courier service provider owns 50 percent of Professional Mutual Holdings Inc. which, in turn, owns 80 percent of the pre-need firm TPG Corp.

However, Araneta told the INQUIRER that the hiring of architects was not taken up by the board.

ATR KE Capital also said that the LBC Group previously lodged three complaints against the investment house over the last few months in "[a continuing] attempt to avoid paying the P353.25 million" it reportedly owed the ATR Group.

Earlier, the ATR Group filed a suit against LBC in the United States "for corporate waste and breach of fiduciary duty."

"Offhand, we would view [the complaint] as pure harassment, in connection with our P353 million claim against Mr. Carlos Araneta and LBC Development Corp., and the case filed against them in the United States," according to ATR KE.

In its complaint, LBC claimed that in May 2001, ATR KE Capital spent P1.079 million of the TPG trust fund to pay for the services of the architects, who included the son of ATR KE Capital chair Ramon Arnaiz.

"The commissioning of the son of ATR's chair to render the building design ... is highly anomalous," the LBC's legal counsel said.

The LBC also claimed that "the project was awarded without a benefit of public bidding or soliciting quotations from at least three qualified architects.

"ATR should never allow its executives or any of their family members to deal directly and gain benefit out of the trust funds," LBC added.

ATR KE said in a disclosure to the PSE that "the use of the TPG trust fund to pay for the best use study was actually suggested by Mr. Carlos Araneta (LBC director) himself, and that Mr. Ramon B. Arnaiz, chairman of ATR KE Capital, abstained from the TPG Board deliberations of this engagement since one of the three architects is his son."

But Araneta countered: "How can I suggest something to the board, which was not taken up by the board? ... It is the money of the trust fund, and only the trust fund manager, ATR KE, has full power and authority—without intervention from the TPG—to decide (on where to invest the fund)."

Araneta earlier sought to annul a 1999 joint venture agreement with the ATR Group.

Also, the Araneta Group refused to buy back a 10 percent stake in the holding firm LBC Global Corp. valued at P353.2 million. This prevented ATR Kim Eng Financial from exercising its option to sell back to Araneta its 10 percent stake in LBC Global.

The option expired last year.

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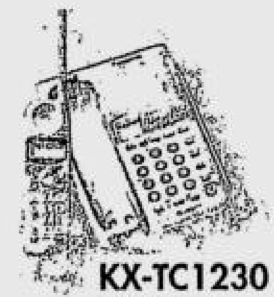
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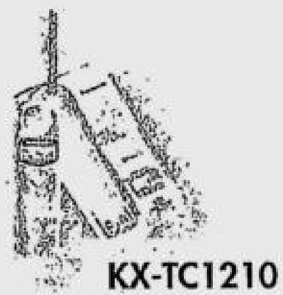
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Retail giants poured in ₱26.78B in 2004

By Ronnel W. Domingo

SANTOS

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry yesterday said that approved investments went up 271 percent to a total of P210.7 billion in 2004.

The DTI yesterday released the revised data which showed that, in January, investments approved by the Board of Investments and the Philippine Economic Zone Authority were estimated to reach about P180 billion in 2004, an increase of about 217 percent from the P56.7 billion approved in 2003.

Yesterday, the department said the updated figures were higher due to the inclusion of P26.78 billion in investments the retail trade giants sank in last year.

These include ventures by Louis Vuitton Malletier SA, Adidas Salomon AG, Caltex Services Philippines Inc., McDonalds, Petron Corp. and Watsons Personal Care Stores.

The investments, which are expected to create about 5,000 new jobs, came in five years after the Retail Trade Liberalization Act allowed foreign companies to engage in the local retail sector.

Before the measure was signed into law in 2000, foreign retailers used to put in only P470 million or a mere 0.8 percent of total investments. Last year's P26.78 billion accounts for 12.7 percent of the total.

Trade Secretary Juan B. Santos said the influx of more retail businesses from abroad was a sign of the growing confidence of foreign firms in the nation's economy and their firm belief that they could do profitable business here.

"Foreign retailers have seen the increasing buying power of Filipinos and this ignited their interest to do business in the country," Santos said.

As of Dec. 31, 2004, investments from foreign retailers have reached a total of P48.01 billion, accounting for 208 stores and about 11,900 new jobs.

The biggest came from the US fast-food giant McDonalds, which put in P36.7 billion in 155 outlets nationwide.

Also, BOI approvals grew 481 percent, generating P164.5 billion, while Peza approved investments went up to P46.1 billion, or 62 percent higher than the previous year's.

The biggest projects were committed in the power sector, including GNPower Ltd.'s P96.52-billion combined cycle power plant that runs on liquefied natural gas, and two of PNOC Energy Development Corp.'s geothermal projects—the P5.4-billion Negros project and the P2.58-billion Palinpinon 2 optimization project.

Trade Undersecretary Elmer C. Hernandez said investment promotion agencies were stepping up their marketing activities to bring in the much-needed investments that would develop the country's industries in the manufacturing, infrastructure and IT services sectors.

Hernandez, who is also BOI managing head, said the BOI was already preparing the 2005 Investment Priorities Plan and that the 2004 IPP was being reviewed "to tailor-fit the next one to the needs of the industries."

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1) *Dr. Steven Rood* - He is the Philippine chief representative of the Asia Foundation, which is a donor institution committed to the development of a peaceful, prosperous, and open Asia-Pacific region. With a network of 17 offices throughout Asia, the Foundation provided US$72 million in program support and distributed over US$28 million worth of educational materials throughout Asia in 2004.

2) *Cecilia Quiocho-Astilla* - She is an advisor for GTZ, which is an international cooperation enterprise for sustainable development with worldwide operations in 130 countries. GTZ provides viable, forward-looking solutions for political, economic, ecological and social development in a globalized world. She will give insights and share her experiences regarding donors & government programs.

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US firm pushes RP as global IT hub

THE GOVERNMENT and private sector should embark on an aggressive international marketing campaign to promote the country as a destination for information and communications technology ventures to maximize its potential, according to an American consultancy firm.

Tully Moss, president of Magellan Alliance, yesterday told a forum of industry players and government officials that the Philippines held the second largest market share in outsourcing, but that the sharing of knowledge about the country was very low.

The country has been attracting companies in the US, Europe and other developed countries and regions as a destination for outsourced services.

Experts say the country enjoys an advantage over other contact center locations like India due to competitive costs, a talent pool that is highly educated and naturally service-oriented and its cultural affinity with major markets like the US.

"The Philippine Inc. brand [as a destination for IT businesses], as well as its potential of creating value for stakeholders must be articulated," Moss said.

The forum, which focused on positioning the Philippines as a global center for IT-enabled services center was organized by the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines and John Clements Consultants Inc.

Moss also proposed that the local industry, along with concerned government agencies, work on influencing consultancy firms, other governments, industry associations and other entities that influence investment decisions.

"You must leverage offers of help from NASSCOM [National Association of Software and Service Companies, the chamber of commerce and India's main trade body for the sector], foreign governments and others for this effort," he said.

Another step was to invite select media organizations to send representatives to the country, where they can be apprised of how conducive the Philippines is for ITES activities and get first-hand information on the situation here.

"You must also work on getting speaking roles in outsourcing conferences abroad, especially in the United States," Moss said. "Many people in the US do not realize the close relationship of our two countries and how [this can be favorable to making business]." *Ronnel W. Domingo*

DOF says no to House proposal on VAT bill

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance is not in favor of a proposal from the legislature that will disallow the passing on of value-added tax to consumers.

A Finance official explained that the proposal was not administratively possible.

"Who will determine if it will be passed on or not?" Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran asked.

According to Beltran, it is the nature of VAT to be passed on because of its input-output credit mechanism.

The proposal to disallow the passing on of the VAT came from opposition congressmen led by Minority Leader Francis Escudero.

The congressman said his group would only support the proposal to lift the VAT exemption of several products and services if the bill would contain a "no-pass on" provision.

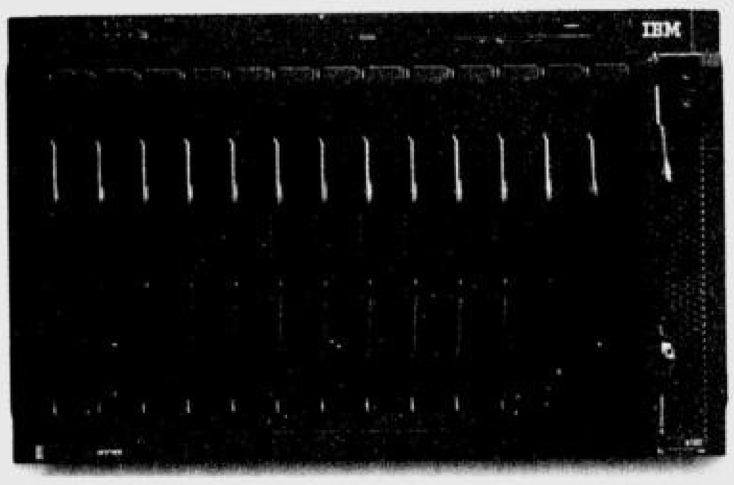
The DOF has identified various products and services whose VAT exemptions should be lifted. These include imported petroleum and its raw materials, services rendered by cooperatives, and those rendered by doctors and lawyers.

Opposition congressmen said that, by disallowing the passing on of VAT, poor families would be protected from the expected increase in prices of goods and services.

But the DOF said there was no way to monitor whether or not businesses would pass on the VAT to consumers.

The DOF has also stressed that the increase in prices resulting from an expanded coverage of the VAT, and from a separate proposal to increase its rate from 10 to 12 percent, will only have a minimal impact on poor families.

Finance officials have cited a government study showing that an increase in the VAT rate or expansion of its coverage will only result in a 0.2 percent increase in expenses of poor families.



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Batangas feed millers to invest in hybrid corn

LIPA CITY—Feed millers, egg producers and hog/cattle raisers of Batangas have agreed to invest in the production of hybrid corn.

The move to plant some 1,391 hectares to hybrid corn is expected to solve the province's problem with erratic corn supply that led to increasing prices of pork and poultry products.

The resolution to engage in hybrid corn production was signed by the stakeholders of the corn production program during a forum last month with the Batangas Corn Production Committee.

Industry data showed that Batangas uses some 1.5 tons of corn a day to produce feeds.

About half of the supply comes from as far as Isabela, thus, increasing the cost of the feed.

"If the 8,000 hectares of vacant land in the entire province is planted with corn, the price of pork and poultry products will not be as high," said Nicanor Briones, president of Limcoma Multi-purpose cooperative.

Batangas is the country's main source of poultry products and one of the top five suppliers of pork.

Briones estimated that producing corn locally could reduce the price of corn by at least P1 a kilo, which would translate to significant savings.

Corn production has not kept up with demand, according to data from the Department of Agriculture.

For instance, pork production increased 11.2 percent from 1995 to 2004, while corn production only went up by 3 percent.

"We have no permanent corn planters. That's because other high-value crops compete with corn production. When a farmer sees that the price of sugarcane or banana gets higher, they would automatically stop planting corn and switch to the high-value crops," Capellan said.

"But the government is encouraging farmers to plant hybrid corn."

She also encouraged the Agrarian Reform Communities (ARC) to form groups and plant corn. *Mei Magsino-Lubis, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

HOG raisers signed up for a hybrid corn production program to help bring down pork prices.

THE NEWS. Spanish Ambassador to the Philippines Ignaci Sagaz (left) and Spain's economic and commercial counselor Jose Miguel Cortes (right) read a copy of the Philippine Daily Inquirer during the opening of the 2nd Spanish Products & Services Expo at the SM Megamall.

Bohol taps group to draft ₱10-M tourism master plan

By Chito A. Fuentes
PDI Visayas Bureau

TAGBILARAN CITY—Encouraged by the recent increase in tourism arrivals, the provincial government has tapped a private group to draft a tourism master plan for Bohol.

Gov. Erico Aumentado said the master plan will be undertaken by Pacific Consultants International (PCI), which has proposed to develop three tourism circuits in the province.

These are the Panglao, Balicasag and Pamilacan islands; the Loboc/Baclayon and Tagbilaran circuit; and the Carmen-Chocolate Hills area.

These are on top of the Ubay area, which was identified for agriculture and eco-tourism.

The local government has also proposed that the plan include the Anda peninsula to Lila and the Tubigon-Calape-Clarin-Sagbayan-Danao-Inabanga-Buenavista-Getafe and Talibon areas among the major tourism clusters.

Aumentado said in a letter to the provincial board that PCI did a similar master plan for other leading tourism destinations, such as Bali in Indonesia and Phuket in Thailand.

The plan was expected to be completed in a year at a cost of about P10 million.

Aumentado said the Department of Tourism will shoulder P3 million of the cost. Each of Bohol's three congressmen will provide P1.5 million, while the provincial government will contribute P2.5 million.

Bohol has been cited as one of the country's best tourism destinations due to its cultural and physical attractions.

It has also been noted for its efforts to promote eco-tourism.

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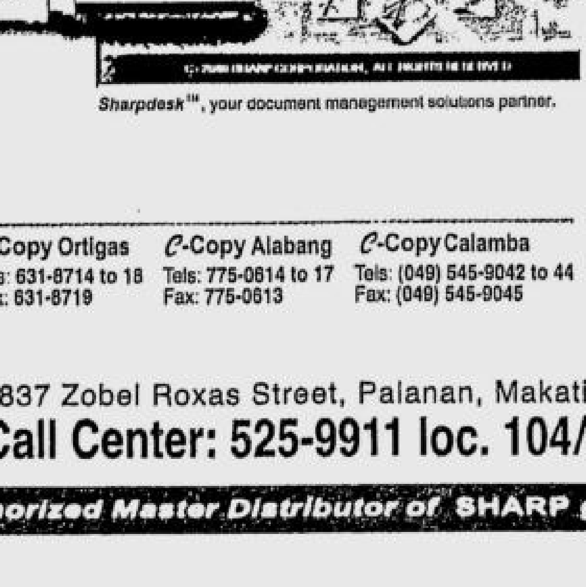

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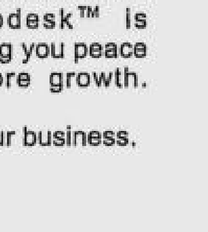

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Cordillera seeks 7.2% growth from 2005-10

BAGUIO CITY—The Cordillera Administrative Region is targeting a 7-percent growth in its gross regional domestic product over the next five years.

According to the National Economic and Development office here, the growth will come from investments in agriculture and industrial firms at the Baguio Economic Zone Authority.

The Regional Development Council of the Cordillera added that the pace of investment growth would increase from 16 percent in 2003 to 20 percent by 2010.

Exports, on the other hand, were expected to double from $2.5 billion in 2003 to $5.2 billion in 2010.

Leon Dacanay, assistant director of the National Economic and Development Authority for the Cordillera, said industrial firms remained the biggest contributors to the Cordillera economy, but manufacturing firms based in the Baguio economic zone generated the biggest growth in 2003 of 95 percent.

Dacanay said the region would have fared poorly without the contribution of Baguio City.

"This tells us that we need to create new manufacturing sectors outside Baguio," Dacanay told the RDC.

The region is hard pressed to become self-sufficient due to the dwindling funds from the national government.

This forced the local government to scale back high-impact infrastructure projects and health services in poor Cordillera communities.

Dacanay said the national government's expected subsidy for infrastructure programs here was at P14 billion, but the pending General Appropriations Act cut it down to only P5 billion.

Doctors of the Department of Health said an interagency memorandum further curtailed government purchases in 2005, which could cause a shortage of medicine.

"The budget has already affected government's counterpart fund for various health programs that are sponsored by foreign donors," said Dr. Antonio Bautista, DOH Cordillera spokesperson. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Smart, Piltel . . .

From page B3

ing yesterday's briefing on PLDT's financial results for 2004.

Smart Communications Inc. and Pilipino Telephone Corp., PLDT's two wireless subsidiaries, ended 2004 with 19.2 million subscribers.

Pangilinan said the wireless units experienced the highest subscriber take-up during the fourth quarter even when Sun Cellular's 24/7 plan was already selling in the market, proving that PLDT was hardly affected by the unlimited campaign.

Sun Cellular launched its unlimited voice and text plan of P250 for a month and P100 for 10 days on top of existing subscription plans on October 2004. The move increased its customers to more than 1.5 million as of January from 700,000 in September 2004.

"Both Globe and Smart have to address this new market. We will decide what options to take. At some point, sooner into 2005, Smart will tap into this new unlimited voice market. It is a market segment that we have to participate in," the PLDT chair added.

Globe would start this month a 30-day promo strictly for subscribers to its Touch Mobile brand. At P300 for 30 days, Touch Mobile users could avail themselves of unlimited voice and text and at P50, 5 days of unlimited text.

The need to protect vital market share will become more pronounced this year as Pangilinan forecasts a slowdown in mobile subscriber take-up for PLDT as well as the whole industry.

It appears though that the projected slowdown has yet to affect PLDT. Its top official said that based on January results, subscriber take-up and revenue were ahead compared to January 2004.

Pangilinan said Sun Cellular must be complemented for having developed a new product that was keeping competitors awake at night. He said though that he was not among the sleepless ones.

"The paradigm is changing with Sun. And this provides an exciting future for PLDT," he said. The PLDT chair is worried that the regulator, the National Telecommunications Commission, would treat Sun Cellular with kid gloves in contrast to how they—Smart and Globe—were penalized during the time when their networks were suffering from drop calls.

Pangilinan said the older players invested "tons of money" into their facility so they could provide quality service.

But if the regulator would not apply rigid standards fairly, then Smart and Piltel would compete under the same terms, he said.

The PLDT chief said he was also worried as to how the NTC would decide on issues related to the third-generation frequencies or 3G as well as on the Voice over Internet Protocol or VoIP.

He said the fixed-line business would be threatened by VoIP. This is an Internet technology that would allow cheaper long distance calls. *Clarissa S. Batino*

Asian stocks up

SINGAPORE—Asian stocks rose on Tuesday, defying weakness on Wall Street, as strong commodity prices lifted resource shares, but disappointing earnings from bank HSBC dragged Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index lower.

US crude oil futures stayed close to $52 a barrel as more freezing weather hit the northeast of the United States, driving up heating oil prices.

Japan's Nikkei stock average rose to an eight-month closing high and the yen strengthened on unemployment and household spending data that added to a string of upbeat news on the economy.

Gains in Japanese trading firm Marubeni Corp., which jumped 4.46 percent, and rivals on strength in commodities prices helped the Nikkei climb 0.34 percent to 11,780.53, its fourth straight day of gains.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index lost 1.11 percent in morning trade, led by a 2.62 percent slide in HSBC, the biggest stock on the index.

HSBC, the world's second-biggest bank, posted 2004 profit at the low end of forecasts and ruled out big deals in the United States and South Korea to focus on expanding its own business.

Taiwan stocks jumped 0.84 percent to a fresh 10-month high on hopes for easing political tensions with China.

Australian stocks gained 0.3 percent as strong crude and gold prices lifted resource shares. Singapore was up 0.4 percent.

Other Asian markets were mixed, with the MSCI index of non-Japan Asian shares slipping 0.21 percent from seven-year highs hit on Monday.

Markets in Seoul were closed.

The decline in the MSCI index followed falls of around 0.7 percent on both the Dow Jones industrial average and the Nasdaq Composite Index in New York.

NYMEX crude oil was down 14 cents at $51.61 a barrel on thin volume and spot gold traded at $434.25, off a 2005 high of $437.55 hit on Monday. *Reuters*

JAPAN has earmarked to spend 37 billion yen ($349.9 million) in the year starting from April on programs to help youngsters find jobs. Officially numbering 520,000, a growing legion of younger people with no intention of working has threatened to drain the country's workforce as the population ages.

REUTERS

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Upbeat data brighten Japan growth outlook

TOKYO—Japanese household spending rose in January at its fastest pace in six months and the jobless rate stayed at a six-year low, fueling expectations that the economy will resume growth this year after a mild recession.

Average spending by wage earner households, a key gauge of personal consumption, was up a real 2.6 percent in January from a year earlier, government data showed on Tuesday.

It was the biggest gain since a 2.9 percent rise in July.

"Household spending figures are much stronger than most expected," said Yoshimasa Maruyama, a senior economist at Mizuho Research Institute.

"Household spending was affected by unfavorable weather late last year, so the January data finally reflects the improvement in household sentiment," he said.

From a month earlier, spending rose a seasonally adjusted 8.2 percent.

A breakdown showed spending was led by sales of automobiles and durable goods such as televisions and refrigerators.

The strong data, along with news on Monday that January retail sales rose 2.2 percent from a year earlier, offered hope that personal spending is finally recovering after being depressed by cuts in jobs and wages.

A pickup in consumption, which accounts for more than half the economy, is seen as key for Japan, which was in a shallow recession for the last nine months of 2004.

Japan's economy shrank 0.1 percent in the last three months of 2004, contracting for a third straight quarter, hurt by slower exports and weak personal spending.

While analysts said the fate of the economy still hinged on exports rather than personal spending, the data helped push the 10-year Japanese government bond futures contract down 0.16 point to 138.03.

The Nikkei share average ended 0.34 percent higher at 11,780.53, an eight month closing high.

In a Reuters poll of 59 economists, strategists, and traders released on Tuesday, about half said Japan's economy will likely pick up in the first half of this year, with a quarter saying they were more optimistic about the country's economic outlook than they were in January.

Separate data on jobs also brightened prospects for Japan's economy.

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 4.5 percent in January, slightly worse than a median market forecast of 4.4 percent but unchanged from a revised 4.5 percent in December.

Figures were revised after changes in seasonal adjustments.

The jobless rate was the lowest since January 1999 and compared with a record high of 5.5 percent in January 2003.

The government maintained that while some parts of the jobs market remain tough, conditions are improving.

Adding credence to that view was a survey of small- and medium-sized companies by the government-affiliated Shoko Chukin Bank showing firms slightly more optimistic about business conditions in February for the first time in five months.

About 70 percent of Japan's workforce is employed by small- and medium-sized firms.

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said the data showed the impact of a recovering economy was beginning to filter through to households, and that such improvements would likely continue.

"In fiscal 2005 [starting April 1], assuming the United States and China and the global economy keep recovering, employment and income conditions should improve and the recovery in the corporate sector should filter through to households more clearly," he told a parliamentary committee. *Reuters*

Worldcom exec pleads ignorance

FORMER WorldCom Chief Executive Bernard Ebbers poses as he leaves federal court in New York City.

NEW YORK—Former WorldCom chief executive Bernard Ebbers, on the witness stand at his fraud trial, said Monday he was out of the loop in the massive accounting manipulation that led to the collapse of the telecom giant.

Ebbers, 63, who faces prison if convicted for his role in the biggest corporate failure in US history, sought to pin the blame for the fraud on former chief financial officer Scott Sullivan, who is the star prosecution witness.

Sullivan "made accounting decisions," Ebbers told the jury in federal court in New York, saying his finance chief had "a keen command of the numbers."

Asked by his attorney Reid Weingarten if he monitored day-to-day accounting matters, Ebbers replied, "Oh no ... I supervised [Sullivan] the best I could as I knew a CEO should."

Appearing in his defense after weeks of testimony from Sullivan for the prosecution, Ebbers sought to play up his humble roots and almost accidental rise as a major corporate leader.

The former basketball coach and motel manager recounted how he got into the telecom business in the 1980s through a rural phone company called LDDS because "we wanted to get more cash to buy more motels."

The small phone company grew into WorldCom, which later bought MCI and turned into a major telecom firm.

"We grew the business, looked at our costs, we had good engineers," he noted.

But Ebbers sought to blunt the impact of Sullivan's testimony that he directed his lieutenants to manipulate the books to meet Wall Street financial targets.

Ebbers added, "I was pretty good at coaching, supervising sales and marketing people ... I focused on areas that I could handle."

Sullivan had painted a picture of Ebbers as a CEO in command of all details of the company before the discovery of the multibillion-dollar fraud that led to its collapse.

Sullivan, who has pleaded guilty to accounting fraud charges as part of an agreement with prosecutors, acknowledged that he directed the manipulation of the books from 2000 to 2002 but that Ebbers was well aware of the situation.

Prosecutors have described Ebbers as the kingpin in the accounting fraud that forced the telecommunications giant into bankruptcy in 2002.

He faces charges of securities fraud, conspiracy and filing false reports with regulators. *AFP*

New Unctad head named

UNITED NATIONS—The Thai director-general of the World Trade Organization will become the new head of the UN Conference on Trade and Development, known as UNCTAD, the United Nations announced on Monday.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan nominated Supachai Panitchpakdi, an economist, international banker and former Thai deputy prime minister, to replace Ruben Ricupero of Brazil whose term had ended. The General Assembly has to approve the nomination but no objections are expected.

UNCTAD, based in Geneva, promotes the integration of developing nations into the world economy and provides extensive research and advice to ensure domestic policies are in line with international action.

Supachai takes up his four-year post as secretary-general of UNCTAD on Sept. 1, three years after he joined WTO.

"Dr. Supachai has done an outstanding job as director-general of the World Trade Organization, particularly in pushing forward the very difficult process of the Doha round, on which rest many of the hopes for economic progress in developing countries," Annan said in a statement.

"His willingness to move to UNCTAD is eloquent testimony to the important role of that body in ensuring that the interest of development are taken into account in discussions on world trade," Annan said.

Supachai began his professional career at the Bank of Thailand in 1974 and in 1986 ran for parliament and was appointed deputy minister of finance.

He joined the Thai military bank in 1988 and then became its president.

In 1992, Supachai became deputy prime minister of Thailand, entrusted with oversight of the country's economic and trade policy making. *Reuters*

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PEOPLE at WORK

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Retreats, working mom style

WORKING MOM

Gina Abuyuan

ON FEB. 19, Saturday, sometime after breakfast, I discovered my feet.

It may have been the breeze flowing through the *shala*, the "yoga room," partly hidden by giant foliage in a corner of Mandala Spa. It may have been the patient prodding of Mo-Ching Yip, awesome, beautiful yoga teacher and spa consultant: "Strong feet! Strong feet!" she reminded us. It may have been anything and everything—all I know is that I was finally paying attention to the soles of my feet, the strength in my heels, and power in my ankles.

Yoga does that to you—it lights up something in you, something that, says yogi BKS Iyengar, "Once lit, will never dim. The better your practice, the brighter your flame."

For three days, during the first of Mandala Spa's four yoga retreats this year, that's what we felt—me, Francine Medina-Marquez, and Stella Arnaldo—like baby candles whose wicks had just been trimmed and lit. Also in our class was Linda Nulty, visiting yoga teacher and new Bora resident, who's just so positive and cheerful, she's plain incandescent!

Back to discovering my feet: it was during the Sun Salute, a series of *asana* (positions), that has you standing, kneeling, getting down on your chest, and up again. I had so gotten used to using the strength in my back and in my thighs that I had forgotten my feet. Every time I got down on one knee (and during the Warrior 1 and 2), I wobbled out of balance. Until my mind let go of its stubborn focus on my thighs and redirected itself to my feet.

Athletes are familiar with the term "muscle memory." Take an out-of-shape basketball player, put him back in court, and he'll know exactly how to stand, where to go, how to shoot that ball. I assume this is what Mo-Ching

RETREATS/ B10

'Is web development profitable?'

By Tita Datu Puangco

Advice FOR THE ANXIOUS PERSON AT WORK

I'VE BEEN following your column on Inq7.net. Considering you receive a lot of letters, I would be so happy and grateful if you decide to take time and advise me regarding my problem.

I am not satisfied with my current work for two reasons. First, I am not enthusiastic about research, which is the type of work I do. Second, I am not gaining expertise on something, which I think is important in order to advance my career. My work is something any college undergraduate can do since I don't employ scientific methods to obtain data, which is completely okay with the company I work for. If the company wants research that is gathered based on scientific methods, they outsource the job.

One time, my immediate boss assigned me to supervise the completion of our web site (I am also assigned to other projects aside from research work although these comprise only about 20 percent of my total work). The web-site development was outsourced and my boss was not completely happy with the output. I took the initiative to undertake the project myself and completely revised the site using the basic computer skills I know. I'm proud to say that he approved the web site I made the first time I showed it to him. In fact, it looked professionally done. This revived my passion for creativity. I say that there's passion since I took the extra work home, I was not paid for the extra job and I acted on pure initiative.

Now, I'm considering shifting to a career in web development. For me, it's striking two birds with one stone. First, I can exercise my creativity, which is a passion for me. Second, I can gain expertise specifically with technical or computer languages.

I want to pursue this career by enrolling in short courses on web development. My question is, will it be worth the investment (both time and money) considering that most firms only hire those with 2 to 5 years experience based on the requirements they put in their job ads? Will short courses be a sufficient qualification for the job? How should I design my resumé? Do you think there are a lot of opportunities for me here in the country?

Although my degree in economics is totally different from IT, I'm a fast learner and I'm willing to do the extra mile. I am already 26 and I think if I don't decide now, it might be too late.

Potential Web Designer

Thank you for your letter. You want to shift from doing research work to web design. Your key interest is for your creativity to find expression. Now, the question is whether web design is profitable or not.

I agree with you that a person has to be aware of what talents he or she has. Recent management literature talks about "talent management." It is true that when you work in an area where you are able to use and optimize your talent, you find greater meaning and fulfillment. Time stops and you can work for hours without feeling fatigue. A writer calls this the "sense of flow." If you will recall the cliché "if you work on something you love, you don't have to work a single day in your life." I agree. Today, I love the work I am doing, giving me much joy and satisfaction.

Can a web designer make good money? I think so, especially if you are able to appreciate the requirements of the client and deliver excellent work that delights the customer. Aside from designing web sites, you can also try to get into web-based marketing. From your letter, I can glean that you have talent for writing and self-expression. Then, your college course in economics will come in handy. Many companies today know they need to expand their marketing scope beyond traditional marketing channels.

What concrete steps can you take? First, look for a reputable training center known for competent trainers with practical experience in web design. Then, enroll in evening classes so you don't have to give up your current work. I suggest you manage your transition to your new profession flawlessly. I have seen professionals making the abrupt shift and then go jobless for prolonged periods. The best time to apply for other jobs is when you are working at your peak in the old job. You come from a strong bargaining power with your self-esteem intact.

Second, you can choose to apply your new web skills in your current job. From your letter, I can sense that your boss is empowering enough to take risks with you. You can volunteer to handle the occasional revision of your web site. Or volunteer to do the web sites of foundations or non-profit organizations. The projects will enable you to gain a track record that you can cite when you start applying for a new job. I remember when we had our company web site done, I asked for

IS WEB/ B10

Financial experts offer simpler way to multiply wealth

By Candy G. Villanueva
Contributor

YOU just got promoted to Assistant Manager. Now you're seriously thinking of upgrading your old sedan. Or maybe you're moving on to a bigger and better company and your compensation package is giving you more than enough to burn. What's next? See Mona Lisa in the Louvre? Get a plush condo unit in Salcedo? How about an investment? It sounds logical but many people who have worked for other people's investments most of their adult life are clueless on the art of entrepreneurship. So you think you'll go the old fashioned and safe way and get yourself a comprehensive insurance. Sounds rational, but there is actually a better way. How about multiplying your money while safeguarding your future?

Investment options

When it comes to investments, the average working Pedro is often lost and confused. With the unstable political and economic climate of the country, he is having enough trouble balancing his checkbook and managing his cash flow. Who has the time, resources or even the wits to invest in business, stocks, bonds or trades? The obvious and safe path to take is to invest in life insurance. It's safe and practical but will it work hardest for Pedro's money?

Experts say that the best way to make the most out of one's money is to diversify and try out various options. But the bigger question is, which option to try? Which would be safe? What would work?

In a recent forum on Philamlife's executive vice president for sales, Rex Mendoza, suggests that people ride on the expertise of investment professionals and to take the risk of availing of the various investment vehicles that abound in the market today. Mendoza advises choosing an investment that offers life insurance plus an investment-linked benefit. He recommends picking a package that allows a portion of the insurance premium to be invested into different investment funds.

Money manager

Last month, Philamlife unveiled a new financial product, the AIG Money Multiplier. The new insurance package is a flexible, potentially high-yielding insurance investment that lets the average employee's money grow while providing life protection. The AIG Money Multiplier has a component, the Asset Multiplier Fund Plus (AMR+), that allows the investor to personally choose where to put his or her investment. This gives more flexibility in managing one's money.

Some may shirk away from the idea of investing. Especially because it entails risks and intensive know-how. The Money Multiplier is managed by a team of investment professionals. "In effect you are looking at Philamlife as an investment manager," guarantees Mendoza.

Money multiplier

With AIG's Money Multiplier, the investor gets to choose whether to invest his or her money in credible corporate and government securities or in listed stocks and other direct equity investments. This feature gives freedom and satisfies the risk appetite. "We are giving clients the chance to be our partner not as a central insurance shareholder, not as an insurance-policy holder but now as an investment shareholder. He is now able to ride on the expertise and take the risk on his own but profit as well on his own," says Mendoza. And because the invested money is pooled with the money of other clients, investors are rest assured of more competitive returns.

Aside from providing a flexible, high-yielding investment instrument, the AIG solution offers the much-needed protection an employee demands. Because it is also an insurance plan, the package provides life protection. With 10 annual payments, investors are guaranteed life protection up to the age of 75. One can also get additional coverage in case an accident occurs and ensure guaranteed insurance protection and income continuation in the event of disability.

Every family provider's concern is those who would be left behind in the event of death or disability. The AIG Money Multiplier guarantees that beneficiaries will receive benefits from both the life insurance component and the investment component. The life insurance component will pay benefits equal to the face amount of the basic term insurance coverage plus any riders attached to the policy. The investment portion gives the full value of the account, or the minimum death benefit, whichever is higher.

(*Send feedback to* candyvillanueva@pldtdsl.net.)

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Employee volunteers power Meralco's commitment to serve

MERALCO volunteers

By Ernie O. Cecilia, FPM
Contributor

WHAT drives 4,616 out of 5,940 regular Manila Electric Company (Meralco) employees to regularly donate part of their salary through payroll deductions for community projects? Why would these employees donate P1.2 million more from their own pockets for the Christmas outreach in 2003? What motivates them to share their own time (estimated to be valued at P15 million over the last five years) to spread joy to the less fortunate in the Meralco franchises, teach high school teachers to improve their skills, train residents on solid waste management?

Adelino Sumague, a staff engineer of 11 years at Meralco and star volunteer explains, "As you grow older, you start to realize that life is not just about earning or accumulating material things. Most of all, it is about sharing ..."

Sumague recalls how difficult it was at the start to wake up on Saturdays and go to the Teacher Education Program (TEP), a banner project aimed at training high school teachers teaching Math, Science or English in public schools. Employee volunteers like Sumague do this as a labor of love—with no overtime pay or compensating time off.

Like Sumague, William Bayona, corporate planning analyst of three years, had to "adjust to the fact that I must be there at 8 every Saturday. But it is all worth it."

Teaching teachers through the TEP entails running several modules totaling 42 hours.

Reynaldo Gomez justifies why the TEP is so significant a contribution to society. He avers, "When you train end-users, the knowledge you impart ends there. They either use it at home or at work, but that's it. When you train teachers, what you share can go a long way. That will be duplicated several times over because your trainees will pass on their learning to their students."

The TEP is so significant to the volunteers that they are ready to make sacrifices. Jo Anne Vicencio, IT consultant, reveals her sacrifice, "I have to shorten my weekly visits to my family in the province. But, I realize how much I gained from this experience—I have realized the sad state of education in our country and, through TEP, I have done my share to help alleviate the situation for our less fortunate countrymen."

In three years, Meralco's TEP has trained 392 teachers in eight public schools, thanks to 242 volunteers who shared 2,410 hours and their talent. The volunteers' work did not go unnoticed as the Department of Education cited Meralco during the CSR Week Expo 2004.

In addition to teaching teachers, Meralco volunteers donate books through the "Libro Ko, Alay Ko" project, which aims to help increase literacy among the youth in areas identified by the Department of Education (DepEd). These past few years, this book donation project has benefited 5,204 students in eight public schools.

Even as the project benefits thousands of students, it also enriches the lives of volunteers. Allan Abrojena, senior superintendent admits, "I have personally found that the project brings out the best in me."

Edilberto Maglilong, central logistics head in Meralco Montalban, typifies the volunteerism spirit in Meralco when he said, "We are always glad and ready to help."

Another long-term volunteer project recently launched jointly with the DepEd is the assessment of electrical installations in 2,332 public schools to ensure safety and rehabilitation of the schools' infrastructure. To date, 25 volunteer engineers have rendered 1,094 hours in seven piloted public schools.

In December 2000, Meralco has rationalized its corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs. Chair and CEO Manuel M. Lopez; then president, announced that Meralco shall adopt CSR as a major corporate thrust. In January 2001, the CSR Office was organized to put more focus and priority to the various CSR undertakings.

Jessica Santos, head of CSRO, explains, "We in Meralco have progressed from corporate giving (in the early '70s to late '80s) to corporate citizenship (the 1990s) to volunteerism (starting 2000). Volunteerism was born out of the need to increase resources for our CSR projects, given the fact that Meralco is a highly regulated company."

Santos credits the employee volunteers for the continuing success of Meralco's CSR projects. She continues, "After being introduced to a project, these volunteers continue to provide support to the identified institutions and communities on their own. They share what we call the three Ts—Treasure (contribution in cash or in kind), Time (doing volunteer work on rest days without pay), and Talent (knowledge, skills or expertise)."

Since 2001, employee volunteers started forming their own groups to mount individual outreach activities ranging from turning over their donations to meal sharing and fellowship with selected orphanages, schools, hospitals and other institutions. By 2003, these outreach projects have helped 79,452 indigent individuals, thanks to 9,431 volunteers who rendered 36,554 volunteer hours.

Executives and spouses, led by Lopez himself, had touched the lives of 1,419 street and day care children as 9,240 volunteers share their blessings during the last three Christmases. In addition, the Munting Mukha ng Ligaya Outreach is a personal project of Lopez during his birth month. Together with volunteer employees, he seeks out the "poorest of the poor" in the franchise areas and personally treats them to half a day of fun and gift-giving. In 2003, Lopez and 211 volunteers made 574 indigent school children feel blessed and happy.

Another worthwhile venture is The Meralco Employees Fund for Charity, Inc. (MEFCI) which started operating in 1978, and is run and supported by Meralco employees. Almost 85 percent of regular employees allow payroll deductions to beef up the fund—P10, P30 and P50 for employees, supervisors and managers, respectively. The fund supports medical missions, disaster relief, scholarship for the handicapped and annual gift-giving to the needy.

Santos reveals, "From 2000 to 2003, more than 6,000 employees helped 10 government hospitals in eight communities. The MEFCI also supports six handicapped scholars, nine charitable institutions and seven indigents with continuing medical needs.

Carl Aquino, AVP and head of Sta. Rosa sector and chair of MEFCI in 2004, observes, "There is a natural gift of volunteerism among Meralco employees. Aside from employees' voluntary contributions, many offices opted to have simple Christmas parties and donate the party funds to MEFCI."

MEFCI President Edmundo Silverio, also AVP and head of corporate logistics, takes pride in employee volunteers. Julie Anne Soler, analyst, feels good inside whenever she volunteers to a project.

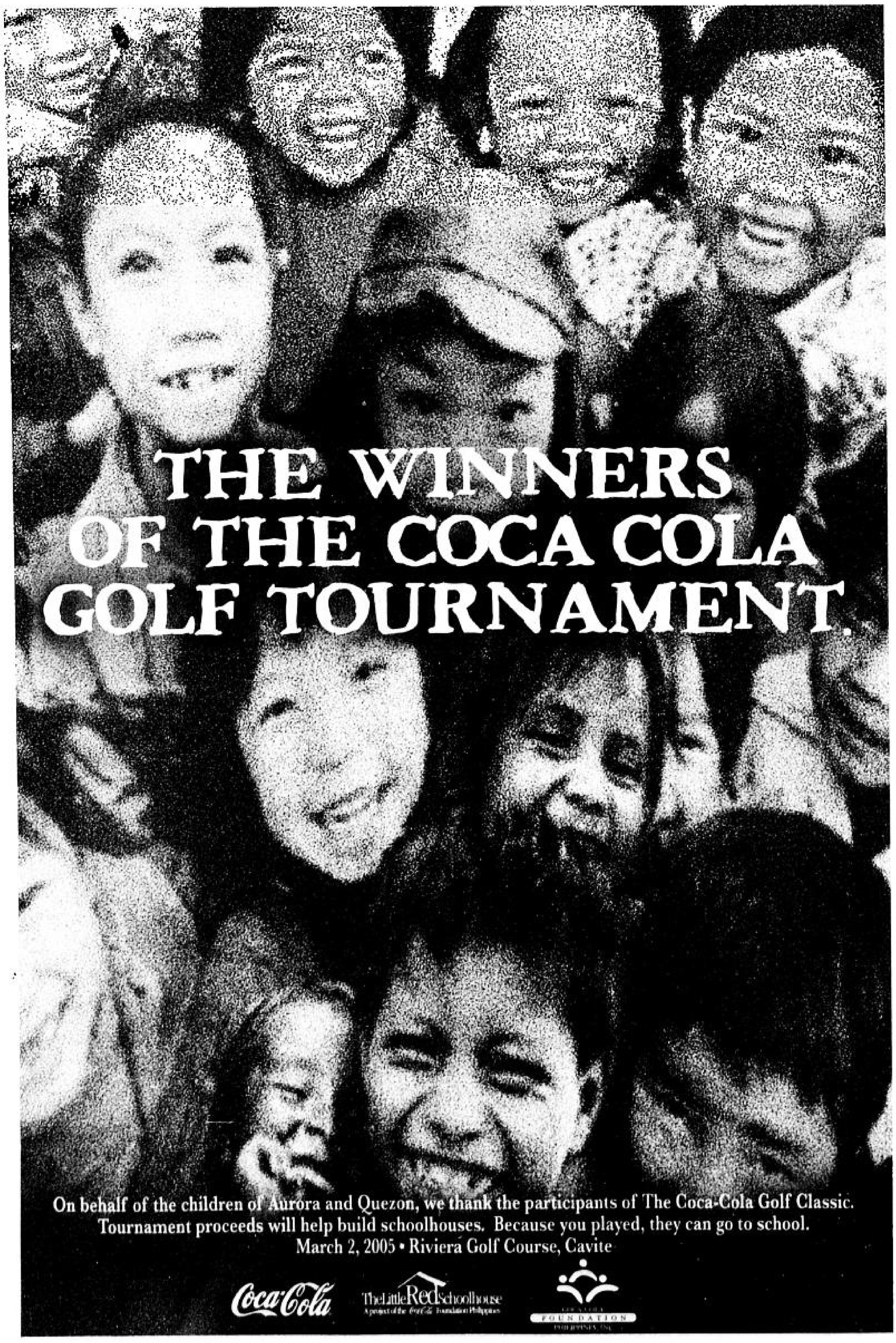
Meralco advocates a zero-waste community. Its employee volunteers hold a series of training for residents on waste segregation, recycling, and composting.

Bayani Tamayo, admin supervisor and 30-year veteran in Meralco takes pride in his volunteer work, "Whenever I see our trainees beginning to appreciate the environment and taking steps to care for it, I know that I have done my part ... and I have done it well."

Not everybody started with fire in the belly, or considered volunteerism to be a personal mission. Jason Calsas, distribution engineer of two years, confides, "At first, it was just about going along with friends. Eventually, volunteering has become a rewarding experience for me."

Perhaps, volunteerism is now a way of life in Meralco. Lopez recalls and credits employees for their sheer kindheartedness and willingness to share, "Meralco's CSR efforts go back a long way. Volunteerism became the foundation of Meralco's CSR programs. It was not a difficult call to make since volunteerism is not new to us. We are committed to helping our communities and we'll keep on doing that in good times or in bad times."

(Mr. Cecilia is president and CEO of EC Business Solutions and Career Center, a human resource consulting firm. He writes the "Ask Your Career Counselor" column in Sunday People at Work twice a month. Send feedback to ec4u-@edsamail.com.ph)



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Retreats, working ...

From page B9

was talking about when she said that yoga works on the cellular level. Once you've learned the *asana*, trained yourself how to breathe properly, your body will remember just how to get into, stay, and get out of the *asana*. The biggest challenge is unlearning what your body was used to before that.

Stepping back

There's a good reason they call retreats "retreats." You literally take a step back, inward and outward, and look at yourself. "Mo-Ching," I said, "in this retreat, I want to learn how to relax." OK, I know what relaxation is; and I know what a relaxing time can be, but besides lazing on the beach, I wanted to know how I could relax, even in the office. I knew *pranayama* (breathing) could help me with that.

So I tried hard to unlearn breathing, the way we—and especially I, an asthmatic—know it: not with the lungs, but with the diaphragm. Not stomach in on the inhale, but stomach out. This is the way babies breathe—lie beside your child tonight and see.

For three days, too, we went back to the basics of nourishment: no meat and the healthiest breakfasts I've had since moving out of my mom's house five years ago—muesli, yoghurt, fruit, divine cardamom muffins. I was thrown back six years, when I had gone vegan and subsisted on alfalfa sprouts and tomatoes. Inside, I felt giddy—happy that I could easily revert to that diet, and not even think of meat.

It helped that just in January, I rededicated my life to God, and didn't have much baggage—physical or metaphysical—to let go of. Right after I had rediscovered my feet, I rediscovered my knees, my abdomen, my elbows, my wrists. In the same morning, I was standing on my head, with Mo-Ching gently aligning my legs. The next day, I did it again. And again. Mo-Ching said I was a yogi many times in my past lives. I don't know about that, but I believe that achievements, little or small, are made possible by three things: 1) your willingness, courage, and humility to learn—or unlearn—things, 2) the wisdom and sincerity of your teacher, and 3) whether or not God gives His blessing (I call it the "Divine Go-Signal").

Peace in stress

So what does this have to do about being a working mom? I had an a-ha moment just last Sunday. Early morning had me at the press, checking the magazine run; back to the office; texting back and forth with Alya Honasan, editor of Sunday Inquirer, and with An, WM founding ed, about stories; and dropping off my daughter at Kids Church. I was shining, brimming with energy. It was an energy I had missed so much I didn't even know I was missing it! I was happy. Could it be that peace can be found in stress? I asked An, who's a Zen practitioner and articulates things much better than I can. "It's called 'living in the grace of the moment,'" she answered. "It's not so much that you're busy but that you're fully present to the experience of being busy. Yes, that the secret of happiness. You're blessed to have found it."

Maybe, too, I'm still on retreat, rediscovering my feet, and doing headstands in between.

For more information on Mandala Spa's yoga retreats, please log on to www.mandalaspa.com. The next retreat will be Living Yoga, April 21 to 24, by Mandala founder Karen Reina.

(Gina Abuyuan is editor in chief of Working Mom magazine. Get the March issue of Working Mom now, with Rissa Samson and son Enzo on the cover. Feedback is welcome at gina_llanes@abs.pinoycentral.com.)

'Is web development ...

From page B9

references and samples of web sites developed by the web designer.

Third, you have choices. I know some web designers who work as independent entrepreneurs or work with other designers. Still others are employed typically by large local companies or by multinational companies.

Finally, find joy and fulfillment when you are finally settled in the creative work that your heart desires.

All the best and God bless!

(Ms Puangco is CEO and chair of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting. Send feedback through e-mail to advice@ancillaedc.com.ph *or fax to* 892-2902.)

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LOT

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KATIPUNAN EXT COM'L
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1,100m² & 453m²@P9.5th/m²
454-5667 / 0918-9235216

LIBIS QC 204m² 6400544

RIZAL

540m² along Felix Ave Cainta
Direct Buyer Only
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OTHER AREAS

300m² 5Yrs 0% Int 6286238

Tagaytay w/view 489;700sqm between Sta.Rosa/Rotonda P6900 /sqm 8895039;6475;4796

OTHER PROVINCIAL

320SQM RES'L LOT P1.1M Davao City nr Mall 09173318471

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

CONDO/TWNHSE

CAVITE

LOT

OTHER AREAS

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371-9702 to 04
410-8367 to 69

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371-9702 to 04
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BATANGAS

Nr Univ of Batangas
400m² 0919-8932975

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

HOUSE

RIZAL

3BR Maids Rm Nawasa H2O 1car grge 10T/mo Vermont Park Antipolo Tel 645-8756

CONDO/TWNHSE

MAKATI

Mkt. Studio 45m²/2Br1Tb 65m² FreePrkg NoDue 8979417

MANILA

ASTRAL TOWER frnt PGH 1br 15T/mo. 09215046978;8311596

QUEZON CITY

4rent 4BR 4TB w/Attic 2CGrg Bellevue Subd. nr. Grace H.S. 374-8832

APARTMENT

MAKATI

STUDIO Size 5T T870-85-41

QUEZON CITY

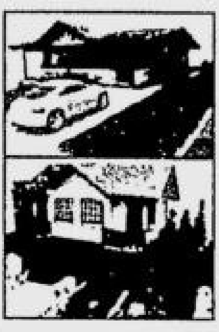
34 YALE CUBAO 9310440

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

HOUSE & LOT

OTHER AREAS

TAGAYTAY
VACATION
HOMES



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371-9702 to 04
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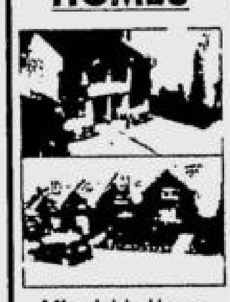
BAGUIO

BAGUIO
VACATION
HOMES



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371-9702 to 04
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Sandoval Ave
Pinagbuhatan Pasig
nr Mercedez Ave front of Republic Glass Asahi
2,000 to 18,000m²
Amada 641-4158 641-4159

ROOM & BOARD

Apartel Manila 7118679

•FURNISH PASAY 8872865•

P200! Sucat Pque 8275345

MAKATI

Mkt M/F P2.8up /Pkg 8906374

BEDSPACE

Mktl nr Ayala P1T Ldy 8974697

BUSINESS RENTAL

BURGUNDY PLAZA KATIPUNAN Q.C. FRNT ATENEO FA103, 75 & 50 m² 9269541 / 7361925 IDEAL FOR SPA GYM CALL CENTER

MALATE 3T/m²
Single Storey Commercial Bldg. 843-7633/37; 843-7539

PTAMO nr BUENDIA 1st class 62/129/148/185m² 8903461 loc. 34 or 19 ofc hrs.

LOAN & MORTGAGE

BUSINES DOCTOR 524-3197

BUSINESS . DOCTOR 524-3197

OFFICE SPACE FOR RENT

Cityland Pioneer Mand. 638-2266 / 2925, 0916-7861716

MALATE MLA 526-8048/49

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
Ang Bangkong May Damdaming-Bayan
1598 M. H. del Pilar St. cor. Dr. J. Quintos St., Malate, Manila
Tel. Nos. 522-0000; 526-0100 connecting all departments

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines invites interested suppliers who are (a) duly licensed Filipino citizens/ sole proprietorships; or (b) 60% Filipino owned partnerships/corporations; or (c) two or more suppliers forming into joint ventures jointly and severally liable; or (d) cooperatives duly registered with the CDA; with largest single contract, similar to the items for bid, for the last 2 years, at least equal to 50% of the approved budget; and with Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) at least equal to the approved budget, to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following items:

ITB No.	Item / Description	Approved Budget	Source of Funds
2005-036	800 units Personal Computer	P 34,400,000.00	LBP Funds
	76 units Laptop Computers	P 7,500,325.00	LBP Funds
2005-054	Two Years Lease of Sanitizers, Air Fresheners (gel type) and Liquid Soap Dispensers complete with installation and the supply of environment friendly sanitizing agents, fresheners and liquid soap for the following:	P 2,616,000.00	LBP Funds

- Water Closet : 247 units - one (1) Sanitizer each
- Urinal : 88 units - one (1) Sanitizer each
- Comfort Room : 138 CRs - one (1) Soap Dispenser each
  - one (1) Air Freshener each

Bidding of the above requirements is scheduled on March 30, 2005 at 1:00 p.m. and the Bid Documents may be obtained from the Procurement Division of the General Services Department, 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, M. H. del Pilar corner Dr. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **P5,000.00** and **P1,000.00** for ITB numbers 2005-036 and 2005-054, respectively.

Interested suppliers are requested to attend the Pre-Bid Conference scheduled on March 17, 2005 at the 25th Floor, Conference Room, LANDBANK Plaza, Malate, Manila.

All particulars relative to the Qualification/Eligibility, Bid Bond, Performance Bond, Pre-bid Conference, Bid Evaluation and Award of Contract shall be governed by the provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

Only those bidders who comply with the Bank's requirements shall be eligible to participate in the bidding.

LANDBANK reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to declare the bidding a failure or waive any defect or informality and to accept bids as may be considered most advantageous to the Bank.

COMMITTEE ON BIDS AND AWARDS

(PDI-March 2 & 9, 2005)

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE OR RENT

COMMERCIAL/ RESIDENTIAL

XAVIERVILLE AVE.1017M²DBO P19.5TH / M² 6374316

TRANSPORTATION FOR SALE

CARS

FORD

FORD CLUBWAGON E-350DSL 650K 0917-4259753 758-1193

MITSUBISHI

L300 '97 Versavan Gas Silver Grey Makinis 6872215 or 09207436327

NISSAN

2001 Nissan Frontier
09198707359 • 09193552515

OTHER CAR BRANDS

Delica Serena Space Gear Pajero L. Cruiser Terrano Hi - Lite - Town Ace Canter Elf Suzuki etc Finance T-In 9120647 / 09178342020

TRANSPORTATION FOR RENT

CARS FOR RENT

Van Coaster 6313496 0919-3220871

CarsVans CoasterBus 422-0296

Cheap Van Rental 9330311

P800/L3 9136710 / 4333682

RENT A VAN
0917-5444721 / 6424405

ROLFE MULTILINES
RENT A VAN w/Drivers
Daytrips, Out of Town Trips
Aromatheraphy w/therapeutic benefits while driving 7510491
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Q.C.: 426-2278 • 426-4084

CAR LOAN

1.4% EZ Car Loan 0917-7499447

1.5% Car Loan 5344441

1.5% CARLOAN 373-6519

TRANSPORTATION FOR RENT

CAR LOAN

1.5% CARLOAN 788-0361

1.5% Easy Car Loan 3748765

1.5% Easy Car Loan 4112547/48

1.5% Easy Carloan 7815352/55

1.5% Fast Car Loan 6560140

1.5% w/oTaking Car 7228942-43

1.5% w/oTaking Car 3650974/75

1.5% w/oTaking Car 7228942-43

•1HR Fast Car Loan 7125202•

2% w/o taking car 7880183-84

2% w/o Taking Car 7262780

2% w/oTaking Car 7221021

2% w/oTaking Car 3732081/82

2% w/oTaking Car 8870490/95

2% w/oTaking Car 8966630/33

2% w/oTaking Car 8959454

2% w/out taking car 5316577

2% w/out taking car 6567685

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

PETS

DOG TRAINER 0919-3419012

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LCR FORM 10.1 (LCRO)

Republic of the Philippines
Local Civil Registry Office
Province of Misamis Oriental
Cagayan de Oro City

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION

In compliance with Section 5 of R.A. No. 9048, a notice is hereby served to the public that EVA O. RAMIREZ has filed with this Office a petition for change of first name from EVA SALVE to EVA in the Certificate of Live Birth of EVA SALVE ONGKIATCO who was born on December 19, 1954 at MANILA CITY and whose parents are RICARDO ONGKIATCO and PEPITA CATERIAL.

Any person adversely affected by said petition may file his written opposition within this office not later than March 11, 2005.

(Sgd.) NORMA S. DIPUTADO
City Civil Registrar

(PDI – March 2 & 7, 2005)

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

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PUBLIC NOTICES

AUCTION SALE

NATION Pawnshop, Inc.
Pob. Meyc. Bulacan will auction unredeemed pledges of SEPT '04 on MAR. 24, '05 10am - *Lanuza & Sons*
(PDI - MARCH 2, 2005)

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given of the Extrajudicial Settlement of the Estate of LUDIVINA PINEDA with Waiver of Shares executed by the heirs on May 20, 2003, acknowledged before Atty. Elsa Verdadero-Perlas, Notary Public in and for the City of Pasig, entered in her notarial register as Doc. No 934, Page No. 13, Book No. CVI, Series of 2003.
(PDI-March 2, 9 & 16, 2005)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice of Loss: Capitol Hills Golf & Country Club Stock Cert. 776-B 1 share under the name of Jose Ramon Moll was declared lost. If no contest received w/in 1 yr new cert will be issued. (PDI- March 2, 9 & 16, 2005)

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

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10yr Term Min 2T 0920-9090749

May PERA sa PUTO 564-2759

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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★LEGAL ASST.★
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LIC DENTIST OPTOMETRIST FEMALE 9362115

SR HAIRSTYLIST FEMALE FOR SUPERVISORY CALL 7245099 /7256855/09175277717

MALE/FEMALE

BSP•BSN•PT•MT
Any Allied Health Grads up to P45T/ Mol 8922818

Direct Maid Yaya Cook 995-7034

Domestic Helper Beautician Nurse 09206262141 5224435

OFC MNGT/MKTG STAFF w/ or w/o exp 9958582 Lk 4 Faye

SALES AGENTS 09178398865

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A PROGRESSIVE COMPANY, HEAVY ON INVESTMENT PROMOTION, URGENTLY SEEKS QUALIFIED INDIVIDUALS FOR THE FF:

Three (3) **Accountant III** – SG-18, BSC/Bus. Adm. Major in Acctg. grad. w/ 2 yrs. rel. exp.; 8 hrs. rel. trng. & RA 1080 eligibility.

One (1) **Psychologist III** – SG-18, BS in Psychology grad., w/ 2 yrs. rel. exp. 8 hrs. of rel. trng. & CS Professional eligib.

One (1) **Human Resource Management Assistant**, SG-8, BS degree w/ 1 yr. rel. exp., 4 hrs. of rel. trng. & w/ CS Professional eligib.

One (1) **Web Programmer**, SG-15, BS degree rel. to the job w/ 6 mos. rel. exp. in web dev't using ASP Java Script, or PHP, with knowledge in systems analysis, MS-SQL is an advantage, w/ 4 hrs. rel. trng. & CS Professional eligib.

Two (2) **Data Encoder IV**, SG-13, BS degree w/ 1 yr. rel. exp.; w/ background in Information Technology, 4 hrs. rel. trng. & CS Professional eligib.

Send resumé with 2x2 picture & pertinent credentials to:

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Makati Central Post Office
1274 Makati City

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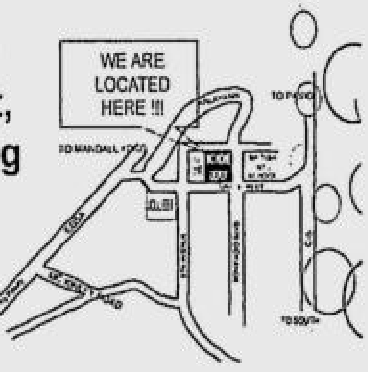
March 2-6, 2005
MC Home Depot,
Global City Taguig

For more details,
please call ABCI at 750-7336 or 750-3794.



Farmers to distribute NFA rice

THE NATIONAL Food Authority has targeted to distribute one million bags of rice through local rice farmers' organizations this year under the agency's Institutionalized Farmers as Distributor (Ifad) Program. The NFA's Ifad allows rice-based farmers' organizations (FOs) to buy a certain volume from the agency's rice imports intended for stabilization purposes and trade it in the market. The Ifad is being implemented to help farmers augment their income and help enhance their entrepreneurial skills. To qualify for IFAD, the FO must be a member of a local registering agency (A Farmers' Action Council or the Philippine Farmer's Advisory Board), a licensed retailer, wholesaler or transporter and must have a Certificate of Operation or Certificate of Good Standing issued by any appropriate registering agency. Interested FOs who want to participate in the IFAD must submit a letter of intent (LOI) with the original copy of pro-forma Board of Resolution, audited financial statement and copy of certificate of registration issued by any of the registering agencies. This year's Farmers as Distributors (FAD) program of the NFA was institutionalized after the successful implementation of FAD I, II, III and IV programs where 2,600 FOs withdrawn some 2.6 million bags of rice distributed in the market. For further details on the NFA's IFAD program, interested parties are encouraged to visit the nearest NFA office or send-in text message through mobile number 0917-6210927.

Imported rice arrive in RP ports

AT LEAST 44,107.5 metric tons of rice imported by the National Food Authority from Vietnam and the United States have arrived in various ports of the country since Jan. 12. Of the total volume, 19,722.50 MT were unloaded in Manila; 5,800 MT in Cebu International Port; 7,400 MT in Davao; 6,500 MT in Surigao; 5,700 in Cagayan de Oro; and 43,889.05 MT were unloaded at the Subic Free Port as of Jan. 31. Meanwhile, some 9,850 MT of imported rice from Vietnam are currently being unloaded at the General Santos City and Bacolod ports. Another 19,938.75 MT will arrive in the country not later than Feb. 18. The volume is part of the 320,000 MT of rice the NFA awarded to suppliers at a tender held last Jan. 6 at the Food Development Center in Taguig. According to NFA Administrator Gregorio Y. Tan, Jr. the government decided to import the staple because of the projected shortfall in local palay production. "Likewise, with the typhoons that hit the country last year and the effects of the El Niño on our crops, importation is being undertaken to fill in the supply gap and effectively maintain buffer stocks for food security," he said.

PNOC
The Energy Company

PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
Philippines MCPO Box 2102 Tel. No. 893-6001/1320

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO RE-BID

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

FABRICATION OF NINE (9) UNITS STAINLESS STEEL TANKS
EDC04-013-1

The Approved Budget is P7,043,000.00 chargeable against PNOC-EDC fund. The contract duration is 90 calendar days.

Application Forms for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be secured from the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group (c/o I. M. Corcuera) starting **February 24, 2005** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Pesos: One Thousand (P1,000.00).

For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on **March 8, 2005, 2:00 p.m.** at the Bldg. V, Grnd Floor, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig.

Applications for Eligibility and sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group at PNOC-EDC, 1st floor, Bldg. 5, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila, **not later than 2:00 p.m. on March 21, 2005** and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to abort the bidding process, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

BAC CHAIRMAN

(PDI–March 2, 2005)

PNOC
The Energy Company

PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
Philippines MCPO Box 2102 Tel. No. 893-6001/1320

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

RENTAL OF FOUR (4) UNITS VAN
EDC05-029

The Approved Budget is P5,280,000.00 chargeable against PNOC-EDC fund. The contract duration is 2 years. The ceiling rates shall be based on the prevailing ACEL guidebook.

Application Forms for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be secured from the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group (c/o I. M. Corcuera) starting **February 23, 2005** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Pesos: Two Hundred (P200.00).

For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on **March 3, 2005, 2:00 p.m.** at the Admin. Complex, PNOC-EDC BGPF, Sorsogon City. Site inspection will follow thereafter.

Applications for Eligibility and sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group at PNOC-EDC, 1st floor, Bldg. 5, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila, **not later than 2:00 p.m. (Contracts Administration Group Office Wall Clock Time) on March 30, 2005** and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to abort the bidding process, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

BAC CHAIRMAN

(PDI–March 2, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Quirino, Municipality of Diffun
Tel. No. (078) 694-70-77

OFFICE OF THE BAC CHAIRMAN

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

February 23, 2005

Notice is hereby given that the Government of the Philippines through the Department of Agriculture-National Irrigation Administration, Quirino Provincial Irrigation Office and the Municipal Government of Diffun, Quirino is inviting prospective bidders/contractors from duly accredited Contractors of Inter-Agency Committee to apply for Eligibility and to Bid for the following locally funded projects under the Department of Agriculture-National Irrigation Administration (DA-NIA) under the Construction/Repair/Rehabilitation of New/Existing National/Communal Irrigation Systems (RRENIS/CIS), to wit.

Contract No.	Contract Description	Approved Budget	Category
QPIO-LGU-01-05	Construction of CAMPAMENTO CIS	Php 3,212,425.77	Medium A
QPIO-LGU-02-05	Construction of LUTTUAD CIS	Php 586,571.27	Small B
QPIO-LGU-03-05	Construction of GABRIELA CIS	Php 3,350,199.78	Medium A
QPIO-LGU-04-05	Construction of AMUGAWEN CIS	Php 917,677.74	Small B
QPIO-LGU-05-05	Construction of DISINABA CIS	Php 917,743.74	Small B
QPIO-LGU-06-05	Construction of DUMANISI CIS	Php 6,884,081.54	Medium A

Minimum Required Equipment Per Project.

No. of Units	Description	Capacity
1	Dump Truck	5.50 cubic meters Net Capacity
1	Cargo Truck	6.00 - 7.00 Tons
1	Crawler With Dozer	200 HP
1	Loader	1.45 cubic meters
1	Transit	
1	Level	

Deadline for submission of Letter of Intent and Contractor's Application for Eligibility	March 16, 2005 @ 5:00 PM
Deadline for Issuance of Bidding Documents	March 14-29, 2005 @ 5:00 PM
Pre-Bid Conference	March 31, 2005 @ 9:00 AM/Social Hall
Opening of Bids	April 14, 2005 @ 9:00 AM

General Conditions

1. Prospective bidders should secure and fill up the Information Sheet from the BAC Secretariat. Eligibility requirements in sealed envelopes, properly bound, with all contents numbered consecutively and signed by the prospective bidder or his duly authorized representative must be submitted to: The BAC Chairman, Municipal Hall, Diffun, Quirino.
2. Unless otherwise indicated in the instructions to Bidders or other bidding and contract documents, all particular relative to the procurement and contract implementation shall be governed by RA 9184 and its IRR-A.
3. Bid documents will be issued to eligible bidders by the Office of the Bids Awards Committee, Municipal Hall, Diffun, Quirino upon payment of the non-refundable fee of One Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (1,500.00)
4. The implementing agency reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any minor defects therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) ENGR. JESSIE L. GARCIA
BAC CHAIRMAN MPDC

(PDI – February 23 & March 2, 2005)

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hingemedia, inc.

Hinge Media Inc., a dynamic company engaged in the publication of high-quality magazines, is in immediate need of Account Executives

1. Responsibility

- The Account Executive will be directly responsible for soliciting advertisements for our publications

2. What we can offer:

- Above-industry base salary plus substantial direct commissions for every closed sale
- Professional sales training and coaching from top sales experts
- Travel opportunities

3. Requirements:

- Female, 23 to 30 years old, aggressive and hardworking
- Must be a graduate of any four-year course from a reputable university
- Must have at least 2 years of sales experience in the industry. Those with less than 2 years' work experience need not apply
- Must possess excellent verbal and written English and Filipino communication skills
- Must have strong, persuasive presentation skills

Applicants are required to personally bring their resume, two (2) 2"x2" photos, transcript of records, and any valid ID. Interested parties may visit our office on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9:00am to 12noon at 1705 Cityland Herrera Tower, 90 Herrera cor. Valero Streets, Salcedo Village, Makati City 1227 Philippines or call 813 6848

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
FIELD OPERATIONS
CENTER FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT NO. 1
ILOCOS TRAINING AND REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER
City of San Fernando, La Union
PHIC Accredited Healthcare Provider
website address: www.doh.gov.ph/itrmc • e-mail address: itrmc@digitelone.com
Tel. Nos. (072) 2425543 / 2425024 Telefax: (072) 888-36-71

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
(Ref. No. IAEB-ITRMC-2005-001)

1. The ILOCOS TRAINING & REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER (ITRMC) now invites sealed Bids from eligible Suppliers/Manufacturers who are qualified to participate for the procurement of the goods below:
   a. IT Equipment (Mid-Range and Network Servers)
   b. Hospital Equipment Autoclave Machine (Re-bid), Hematocrit Centrifuge (Re-bid), Dental Unit & Chair
   c. Drugs/Medicines, Medical/Surgical Supplies, Laboratory Supplies, X-ray Supplies, Dental-Supplies, Office Supplies, Housekeeping/Laundry Supplies, and Printing Service (for the period July 2005 to December 2005)
2. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR-A) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act and is restricted to organizations with at least 60% interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in R.A. 5183. Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The bidder with the lowest calculated bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine his responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

   Submission of Documentary Requirements for Eligibility shall be from March 18, 2005 up to March 29, 2005, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. properly compiled and addressed to the ITRMC BAC Chairman
3. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the BAC Secretariat from March 18 to 23 and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of *One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00)* for items 1.a & 1.b above the *Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00) per category* for item 1.c above. The prospective Bidder or his authorized representative shall receive the Bidding Documents personally.
4. The ITRMC will hold a Pre-bidding Conference open to all interested parties at the ITRMC Conference Room on March 18, 2005, 9:00 a.m. Attendance to this conference is a pre-requisite to the participation in the bidding proper.
5. Bid submission and opening shall be on March 31, 2005, 9:00 a.m. at the ITRMC Conference Room. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.
6. The ITRMC reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) FRANCISCO A. VALDEZ, MD, FPCP, MA, MPA, Ed.D, PhD
Chief of Hospital III

(PDI – Feb. 23 & Mar. 2, 2005)

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

NOTICE TO THE DEPOSITORS OF THE CLOSED RURAL BANK OF RIZAL (Occidental Mindoro), INC.

1. The Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation(PDIC) will start its operations for the servicing of claims for insured deposits in the closed Rural Bank of Rizal (Occidental Mindoro) Inc. (RBRI) on Wednesday, **March 2, 2005.**
2. Depositors are requested to proceed directly to the premises of RBRI where they can file their claims with the PDIC representatives from **March 2 to March 10, 2005**, during office hours, Monday to Friday.

   After the said date, all depositors can file their claims personally at the PDIC Claims Counter, 6th Floor, SSS Bldg., Ayala Avenue corner V.A. Rufino St., Makati City from Monday to Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM or by mail to:

   The Manager
   Claims Processing Department
   Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation
   2228 Chino Roces Avenue
   1231 Makati City
3. Depositors are advised to present the following requirements to the PDIC representatives when filing their claims:
   a. Original evidence of deposit such as Savings Passbook, Certificate of Time Deposit, or Bank Statement including Unused Checks.
   b. Two (2) latest identification cards/documents (IDs) with depositor's signature.

   Other documents maybe required by the PDIC representatives in the course of their processing of claims filed.
4. Pursuant to the provisions of R.A. 3591, as amended by R.A. 9302, the last day for filing claims for insured deposits in the closed Rural Bank of Rizal (Occidental Mindoro), Inc. is on February 25, 2007. After **February 25, 2007**, PDIC as insurer, shall no longer accept any claim for insured deposits maintained with the said closed bank.

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

(PDI - Mar 1 & 2, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Tawi-Tawi
Municipality of Sitangkal

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The Government of the Philippines through the Department of Land Reform (DLR) has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) toward the cost of Agrarian Reform Communities Project (ARCP). It is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contracts of Rural Infrastructure Component for which this Invitation to apply for Eligibility and to Bid is issued.
2. The Municipality of Sitangkal, Tawi-Tawi as implementing partner of the DLR to ARCP. Invites sealed offers/quotations for the supply of various construction materials from eligible suppliers for the Sibutu Potable Water Supply.

a. Package – A ABC = Php 5,543,895.10

Qnty/Unit	Description/Specification
712 pcs	6" dia. X 6.00m uPVC Pipes S-7
347 pcs	4" dia. X 6.00m uPVC Pipes S-7
174 pcs	3" dia. X 6.00m uPVC Pipes S-7
126 pcs	2-1/2" dia. X 6.00m uPVC Pipes S-7
3 pcs	6" X 4" uPVC Reducer
1 pc	4" X 3" uPVC Reducer
1 pc	4" X 2-1/2" uPVC Reducer
3 pcs	3" X 2-1/2" uPVC Reducer
3 pcs	6" dia. X 90 deg. uPVC Pressure Bend
2 pcs	4" dia. X 90 deg. uPVC Pressure Bend
5 pcs	6" dia. X 6.00m G.I. Pipe Sch-40
3 pcs	4" dia. X 6.00m G.I. Pipe Sch-40
6 pcs	6" dia. G.I. Coupling
4 pcs	6" dia. X 90 deg. G.I. Elbow
1 pc	6" dia. X 12" G.I. Nipple
1 pc	4" dia. X 12" G.I. Nipple
2 pcs	6" dia. Stainless Strainer
1 unit	Chlorinator (Injection Type)

b. Package – B ABC = Php 354,461.36

Qnty/Unit	Description/Specification
71 rolls	1" dia. X 60m PE Pipe SDR-11
11 rolls	1" dia. X 60m PE Pipe SDR-13.5
30 mtrs	1-1/2" dia. PE Pipe SDR-11
34 pcs	6" X 1" Saddle Clamp
42 pcs	4" X 1" Saddle Clamp
11 pcs	3" X 1" Saddle Clamp
15 pcs	2-1/2" X 1" Saddle Clamp
1 pc	4" X 1-1/2" Saddle Clamp
6 pcs	1-1/2" X 1-1/4" PE Reducer
6 pcs	1-1/4" X 1" PE Reducer
3 pcs	1" X 3/4" PE Reducer
3 pcs	3/4" X 1/2" PE Reducer
114 pcs	1" X 1/2" dia. PE Reducer
4 pcs	1-1/2" dia. PE Equal Tee
3 pcs	1" dia. PE Equal Tee
1 pc	3" dia. PE Equal Tee
2 pcs	1-1/2" X 1-1/4" PE Reducing Tee
1 pc	3" x 2-1/2" PE Reducing Tee
1 pc	1-1/2" dia. PE Equal Bend

3. Bid Tender may be purchased at the ARCP Local Project Office (LPO) for a non-Refundable fee of Php 3,000.00 during office hours.
4. Pre-bid Conference will be held on March 29, 2005 at 2:00 P.M. at the Municipal Hall.
5. Offers of Quotations shall be valid for a period of one hundred twenty (120) days after opening of quotations and must be accompanied by a bid security in the form of Cash (1%) or GSIS Bond (2.50% of the approved budget for the contract) and shall be delivered to the Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee, Municipality of Sitangkal, Province of Tawi-Tawi on or before April 11, 2005 at 2:00 P.M.
6. Unless otherwise indicated in the Instruction to Bidders or other bidding and contract documents, all particulars relative to the procurement and contract implementation shall be governed by RA 9184 and its IRR-A.
7. The implementing agency reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any minor defects therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the government

(Sgd.) MAHDUM T. SAMUDDIN
BAC Chairman

(PDI - March 2, 2005)

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John 14:6

MILAGROS M. DE GUZMAN

Peacefully joined her Creator and her loving husband Quirino on February 28, 2005 at the age of 82.

Her loving children **Victor**, **Reynaldo** and **Myrna**, **Cynthia** and **Ed Ragasa**, **Jun** and **Corito**; grandchildren **Millette** and **Rey Reyes**, **Rocky de Guzman**, **Mitzi** and **Don Ginn**, **Mignon** and **Nath Santos**; **Jed**, **Candy** and **Cookie Ragasa**; **Ryan de Guzman**, **Hannie** and **Marc Vives**, **Renchie de Guzman**, **Sugar** and **Manny Sa**; great grandchildren **Rayrand Reyes**, **Ysai Reyes**, **Jake Ginn**, **Iain Santos**, **Jagger Vives**, **Gabby Vives**, **Xavier Sa**, and **Alyssa Sa**; and relatives request the pious reader to pray for the eternal rest and everlasting happiness of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Chapel A, Christ the King, Greenmeadows Avenue, Pasig City.

Interment will be on Sunday, March 6, 2005 after the 8:00 a.m. Mass, at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

BENJAMIN T. FORONDA

born on February 20, 1926 at the age of 79.

and

NORA F. FORONDA

born on May 20, 1930 at the age of 74.

both of Kidapawan, Cotabato and Sta. Maria, Ilocos Sur
and former Auditors of the Commission on Audit in Region XII
died on February 28, 2005.

Their family and relatives requests your prayers
for the eternal repose of their souls.

Their remains lie in state at their residence at
Poblacion Norte, Sta. Maria, Ilocos Sur.

Interment to be announced later.

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Message of Thanks

We the children, **Jay** and **Techie**, **Henrick** and **Vicky Mauritsen**, **Tony** and **Cynthia**, and **Bobby**, grandchildren and all relatives, friends of the late

HIGINIA ERICTA LLANTADA

who joined our Lord on February 20, 2005

wish to convey our most heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to all those who paid their last respects, offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers and messages of sympathy, kept vigil and comforted us at the time of great loss and sorrow.

We find strength in knowing that she touched so many lives in the various organizations she joined in her concern for others and in her love of God.

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Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
Intramuros, Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) invites all interested bidders to participate in the re-bidding for the "REPLACEMENT OF TWO (2) UNITS PASSENGER ELEVATOR CARS WITHOUT MACHINE ROOM" at the Muralla wing of the DOLE Building with an approved budget for the contract of P5 Million Pesos.

Interested bidders must register at and submit registration requirements to the Property Division, Administrative Service, 2nd Floor, DOLE Building, Muralla Street, Intramuros, Manila starting **February 24, 2005**. Deadline for registration is on **March 7, 2005**.

Only bidders duly registered with the DOLE may be allowed to participate in the competitive-bidding activities, to wit:

ACTIVITY	DATE	TIME	VENUE
Pre-Bid Conference	March 8, 2005	1:30 p.m.	Conference Room, 2nd Flr., DOLE Executive Building, San Jose St., Intramuros Manila
Submission of Eligibility Requirements	March 15, 2005	between 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.	–same-
Submission of Bids	March 29, 2005	between 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.	–same-

Eligibility requirements shall be distributed during the Pre-Bid Conference or they can be secured on **February 24, 2005** at the Property Division, Administrative Service, 2nd Flr DOLE Bldg., Intramuros, Manila.

Eligible Bidders are also enjoined to inspect the DOLE premises prior to the conduct of the Pre-Bid Conference in coordination with the General Services Division, Administrative Service.

Eligibility documents shall be submitted to the DOLE Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) in a sealed envelope marked with the title of the item/project to be bid and the name of the bidder in capital letters addressed to the undersigned on the date and time specified. Registered bidders are invited to witness the eligibility check on the said date at exactly 2:00 p.m. at the same venue.

Interested Bidders are requested to present their proposals, personally or through their authorized representatives, on the date of the bidding. The DOLE reserves the right to reject any or all bids, without offering any reason, waive any informality therein and make an award to the bidder whose bid is most advantageous to the Department. The DOLE assumes no obligation for whatever losses that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of bids, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

For further inquiries/information please get in touch with Ms. Lily Pearl L. Guerrero and Ms. Liberty C. Angeles, members of the BAC Secretariat at telephone numbers 5273480 and 5273583.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. MA. ELENITA DUNGO-NIETO**
Vice-Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee and
Officer-In-Charge, Legal Service

(PDI - Feb. 24 & March 2, 2005)

National Power Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

NPC-MMSD 2005-005

Adv. - March 1 & 8, 2005

The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC)-MMSD of NPC invites interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following requirements.

Schedule	Date/Time & Place of Bidding	Item Description	PR No./Inquiry No.	ABC
I	March 22, 2005 10:00 AM Pahiyas Room	Hauling Services of Diesel Fuel from designated origin to different SPUG Luzon Power Plants and Barges	KCR PB050222-MMKR2466 (PB2) HO-LOD-05-0004	7,425,760.00

NOTE: A Pre-bidding Conference will be held for the following bidding schedules:

Schedule	Date	Time	Place
Schedule I	March 9, 2005	2:00 PM	Moriones Function Room

Complete sets of Application form for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be obtained from the Materials Management Services Division, Materials Management Dept., of NPC, Diliman, Quezon City with Tel. No. 9245357/9245477 upon payment of non-refundable fee of Php500.00 per schedule starting on **March 1, 2005**, from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. only. No bid documents will be issued 3 days before the date of bidding.

Bids will be received at the assigned Bidding Room, MMSD, MMD, NPC, Diliman, Quezon City on the date and time specified above after which Eligibility Requirements and Bid Proposals will be opened in the presence of attending bidders. Certificate of Registration issued by PSD/MMSD will be honored provided that the Certification is still valid.

Prospective Bidders shall signify conformance to bidding terms and conditions as required and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution in accordance with the IRR of Republic Act No. 9184.

The Bidder shall furnish as part of his/her bid, a bid security in the amount equivalent to a percentage of the approved budget for the contract to be bid in the form of Cash, Manager's/Cashier's Check, Irrevocable Letter of Credit - One Percent (1%), Bank Guarantee - One and a half percent (1.5%), Surety Bond - Two and a half percent (2.5%), penal and callable on demand issued by a Surety or Insurance Company accredited by the Office of the Insurance Commission.

NPC reserves the right to reject any or all bids at any time prior to award of contract, waive any defects therein, and accept the offer most advantageous to the Corporation, without thereby incurring any of the following: a) liability whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bids; and b) obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the grounds for the basis of the BAC's action.

(Sgd.) **LORENZO S. MARCELO**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee
MMSD-NPC

(PDI - March 2 & 8, 2005)

NREA conducts business meeting

THE NATIONAL Real Estate Association (NREA), the industry's one-stop trade organization, conducted a business meeting on Feb. 24, from 1 to 5 p.m. at Gabaldon Hall, Club Filipino, Greenhills with BIR Commissioner Guillermo L. Parayno, Jr. as guest speaker, where he is expected to update NREA members and associates on the latest tax developments affecting them. Another speaker was chair Roberto 'Obet' M. Pagdanganan of the Phil. International Trading Corp (PITC). Concurrent Philsoc chair of the Southeast Asian Games, Pagdanganan, a former NREA vice chairman, discussed NREA's role as volunteer organization during the SEA Games scheduled on Nov. 27 to Dec. 5, in the Philippines. An open forum followed. New members was also inducted during the affair. Non-members also attended by calling tels. 913-4463 & 912-3492.

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BUSINESS

SEANZA MEET

Forum sees gains in liberalization

By Doris C. Dumlao

TETANGCO JR. PDI PHOTO

CENTRAL bankers from across Southeast Asia New Zealand and Asutralia have agreed to assess the impact of ongoing global financial liberalization on regional monetary, exchange rate and banking supervision policies.

The Seanza meeting, hosted by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas over the weekend, focused on the role of central banks in the modern and integrated financial system, BSP Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said in a briefing Monday night.

The acronym Seanza is derived from the initials of the words Southeast Asia, New Zealand and Australia, and is established as a forum of central bankers from 20 countries across the region.

With the liberalization of financial transactions in many countries, the forum recognized the advantages as well as the risks, Tetangco said.

"Advantages would include access to overseas financial markets and availability of modern technology from the more developed jurisdictions," he said. "But there are risks like contagion during the 1997 crisis."

In July 1997, Southeast Asian currencies went under heavy speculative attacks due to the outflows of hot money, in turn triggered by the reversal of the property sector in Thailand.

"Thus, greater financial system integration has implications for monetary policy, exchange rate policy and banking supervision," Tetangco said. "Different countries, in the end, will choose the policies deemed appropriate for them given domestic conditions."

He noted that there were central banks which were using the inflation-targeting approach to monetary management like the Philippines and Thailand, while there were others using floating, managed floating or currency board systems.

"In the case of the Philippines, we'll continue with the inflation-targeting approach," Tetangco said, noting other countries which adopted this strategy have found merits in sticking to it as well.

Meanwhile, the forum also discussed the biennial central banking course offered by Seanza.

"This is the group's main product, [for] central bank officers with potential, to prepare them for executive positions in the future," Tetangco said. "This will continue."

"The BSP has benefited from this by sending participants over the years," said the country's next central bank governor.

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Forget about traffic and pollution. Forget about parking. Because nothing beats the comfort of living in a city within a city. Right beside One Gateway Place is the newly opened Robinsons Place Pioneer Mall where a complete line of products and services are available for residents to enjoy such as: Robinsons Supercenter, Handyman, Robinsons Department Store, Robinsons Movieworld and numerous trendy micro retail shops, among others.

So stroll leisurely at the Mall. Relax and unwind. Let go of worry, anxiety, and pressure. There's no need to rush home. At One Gateway Place, home is just a minute away.

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THE BUZZ ON BAZAARS Part 2

Last week's young entrepreneurs are still reeling from the great feedback you gave them.

THIS week, we have another batch of amazing young geniuses.

Two artsy sisters who make nifty scrapbooks, notepads and beaded bookmarks; a *kikay* girl whose online domain is a haven for *kikay* goods; an accidental entrepreneur who is now making fun earrings; an Architecture graduate whose fab creations have been making waves in two different cities; a young mom whose P75-peso lamps can light up your world; an artist who can whip up jewelry based on your favorite icons; a girl who takes pride in creating unique and affordable accessories; a young businesswoman who designs colorful bags; some graduating students who fought hard for their edgy underwear brand; two different twenty-four-year-olds with a shared passion for creating beautiful accessories; and an enterprising twenty-three-year-old who hand-beads ultra-comfy flip flops.

You'll find them all in 2bU!'s second print bazaar special.

Happy shopping!

If you're a young entrepreneur and you want to have your products featured in our pages, e-mail us at thefashionfreaks@yahoo.com.

From 'suman' to bags

Mimi Taneo is the girl behind the colorful bag line

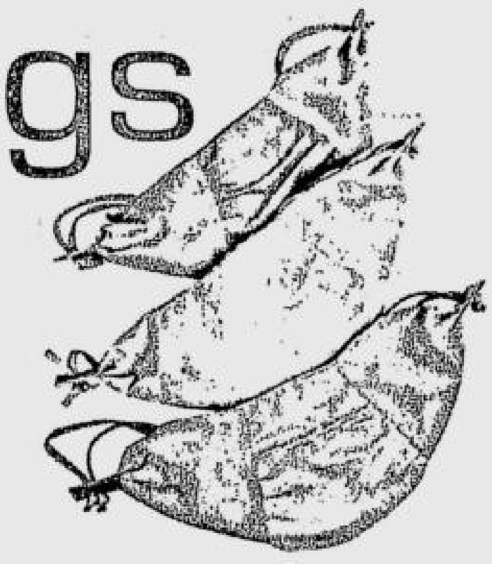
Text by Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Ocs Alvarez

MIMI Taneo had no plans of going into bags. Her first venture into business was supplying *suman latik* to a hotel in Ortigas. But she found the business tiring, and she had to cut classes.

"The bags were actually the answer to the problems I had with the *suman latik* business," she said. "It all started out with a plain black bag that caught the attention of my friends. They kept asking where I got the bag, so I thought, 'Why not sell to them?'"

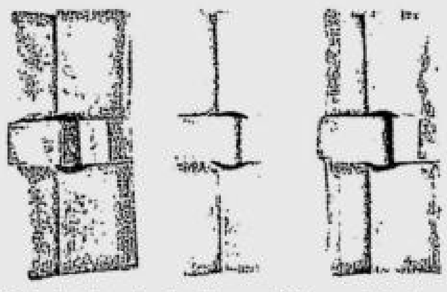
Word got around, and pretty soon, Mimi's bags were getting sold. "I started by mixing and matching various designs; I suppose that's what makes my bags saleable," she says. "Customers have the power to order a bag of their own design, colors and materials, and at a good price, too. MIxMI bags are fashionable, colorful and affordable."

Call Mimi Taneo at 0922-8059208. E-mail mixmi_bags@yahoo.com. Log on to http://mixmi.multiply.com/photos.

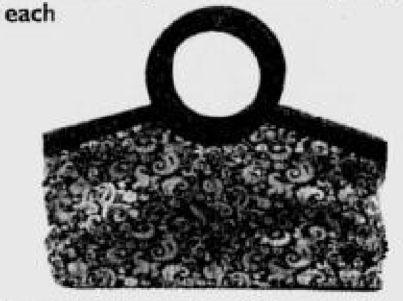


BANANA bags in yellow, sky blue, and pink, P550 each

"MANO Po" bag, P450 and clutch, P380

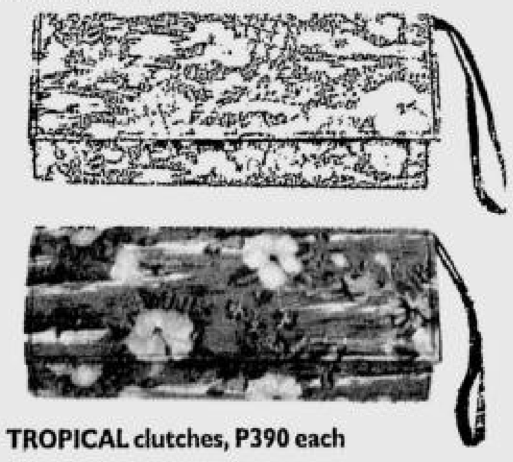


SPIN clutches in sky blue, white and pink, P380 each



BLACK Oriental roundhandle bag, P450

COMIC strip purses, P450 each



TROPICAL clutches, P390 each

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Join the Globe Girlfriends Club on or before March 3 & get a chance to win tickets to Norah Jones Asian Tour on March 12, 8pm /Araneta Coliseum. 150 club members will get 2 free tickets each!

Two ways to join the club:
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• Send CLUB first name last name /address / birth month /day /year to 2209.*
Example:
CLUB Abby Elegio/57 Blue St. QC, MM /02/18/1972
2. Through Globe Business Centers
• Fill up a GGF membership form and submit to Globe personnel

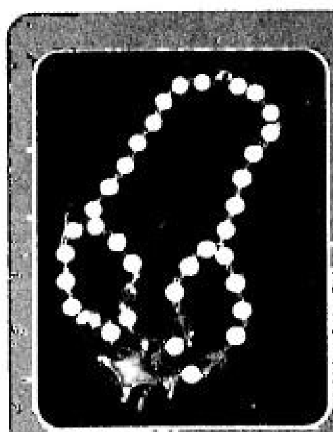
Get a free bag when you join the Club at the Girlfriends booth in Araneta Coliseum on March 12.
* All text to 2209 is FREE.

Download exclusive Norah Jones Ringback;

Title	Keyword
Come Away With Me	EA013
Don't Know Why	EA029
Nightingale	EA316

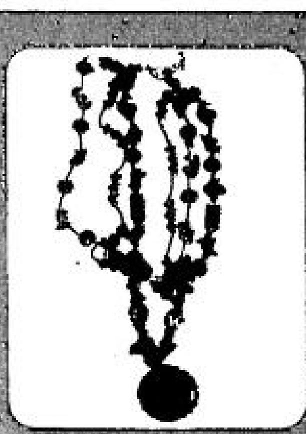
To download, text keyword to 2332.
Ex. text EA316 to 2332 for Nightingale ringback tone.
To preview, text H <keyword> to 2332.
You will receive a text message to call 2332.
P30 for 30 days/ ringback, P2.50/text
P5/min. for calls to 2332.

globe girlfriends club
making great things possible for her
Globe HANDYPHONE


GREEN antique, P350

BLUE royalty, P350

PINK flower, P350


STANDARD red, P350

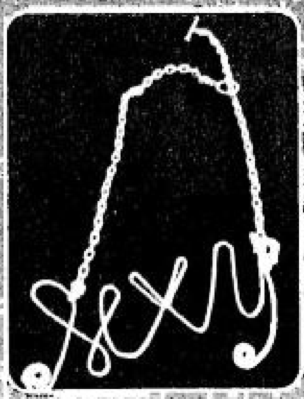
ROYALTY red, P350

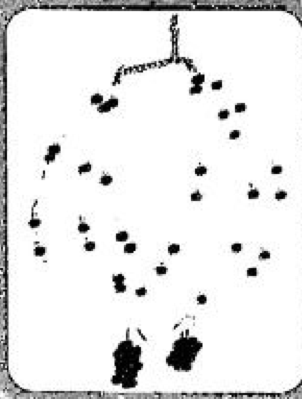
ROYALTY blue, P 350

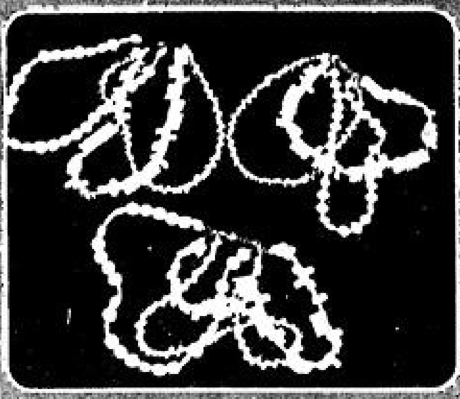
GRECIAN goddess, P350

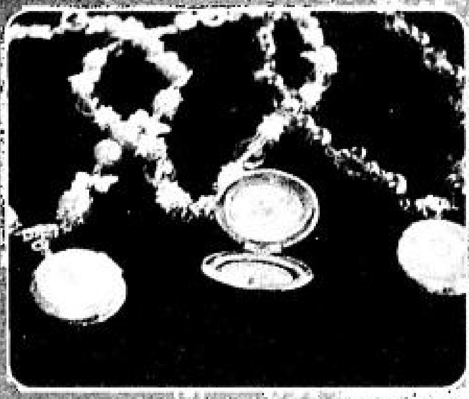
METALLIC, P250

BLUE standard, P350


SEXY, P200

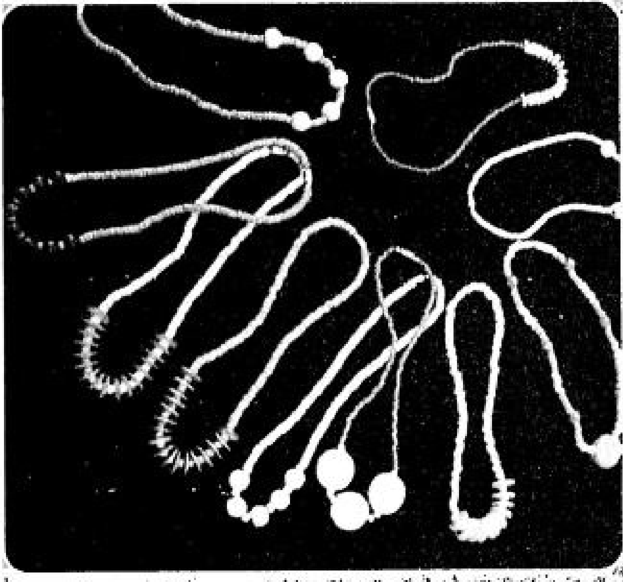

DANCING pearls, P200

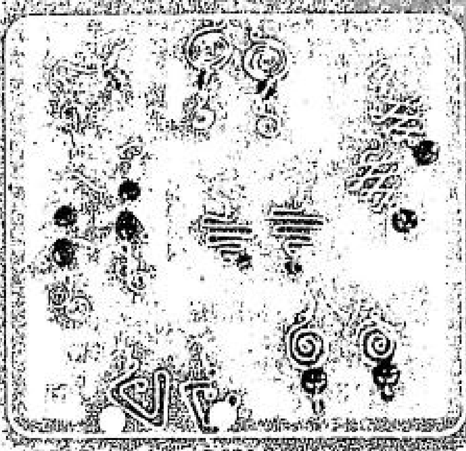

CAPIZ shells, P380


LOCKET, P350

A tale of two cities

[and a lot of jewelry]


WOOD chokers, P150


GOLD earrings, P150

STEEL choker set, P600

Text by Pam Pastor
Photos by Roger Carpio
and Romy Homillada

YOU can say that twenty-three-year-old Farah Abu is a whiz with her hands.

In high school, she used to improvise her jeans and do her own beadwork. In college, she made her own clothing without sewing machines. At one point, she even whipped up a gown for her sister overnight.

"I am business-minded, ambitious, artistic and restless. I never run out of things to do. Whatever it is, I put my heart into it and do whatever it takes to get what I want. I just love to make things beautiful and I love to make beautiful things."

In 2003, she tried making accessories out of stones and crystals and ended up loving it.

"Every design for me is a challenge and I put my heart and soul with each design to make it right, to make it perfect."

Soon, Farah began selling her creations, not for money but in the desire to spread the joy of owning beautiful things. "I can't wear them all you know and they need to be worn."

Since then, her brand G.L.A.M. (Great Love for Accessories Matters) has won the hearts of a lot of fashion fans.

Although it is based in Manila, her wares have also been selling well in her hometown Iligan. "I never really had the intention of selling in Iligan because all my plans were Manila-based. But since I brought my designs with me to Iligan, I decided to display them in one vacant room in our house and started inviting people. I would have to say the business is equally okay in both places in different ways."

Apparently, people in the two cities have varied tastes. "I've noticed they like wood and the ethnic look more in Manila while in Mindanao, people crave more for crystals and rarely look at my wood products."

Farah draws inspiration from her friends and the people surrounding her. "My designs have been inspired by different people. The Rockstar Pearl, Single Butterfly, Butterfly Garden and the two-strand Pink Pearl, were inspired by just one person. When I am inspired and happy, I am able to make a lot of designs in one sitting. The ideas just keep on flowing."

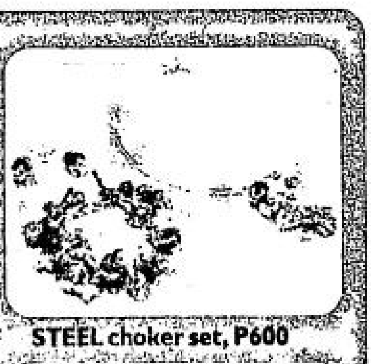
She loves working with pearls. "I think they're so simple and yet so grand."

Farah may be happily living the life of a jewelry designer now but this Architecture graduate from the University of Santo Tomas still intends to pursue her original path. "My plan now is to open a store first in my hometown and go back to Manila to expand while reviewing for the board exams."

We wish her well, no doubt about it, but we hope she'd never stop creating beautiful things. The world needs them.

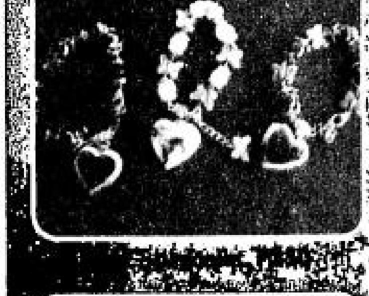
For orders and inquiries, call or e-mail Farah at 0917-7162153 and great_love_4_accessories_matters@yahoo.com.

FEATHER earrings, P80


STEEL choker set, P600

CHANDELIER, P180, and drop earrings, P100

WOOD earrings, P50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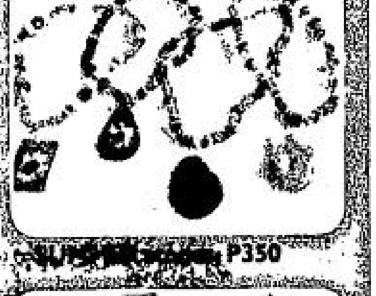
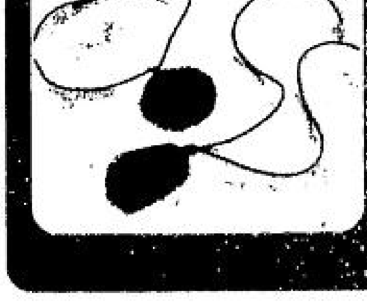
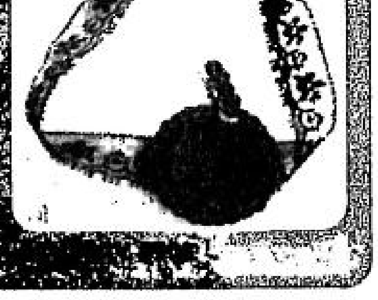

[illegible] P350





DUNKIN' DONUTS PRESENTS
CHRISTIAN BAUTISTA
IN HIS FIRST MAJOR SOLO CONCERT
MARCH 04, 2005 8:00 P M ARANETA COLISEUM

Colour Everywhere

GET A CHANCE TO WIN 2 TICKETS FREE WHEN YOU BUY A DOZEN DUNKIN' DONUTS

With every purchase of a dozen Dunkin' Donuts, pick a stub to win any of the following prizes:
- o 2 tickets to the "Colour Everywhere" concert featuring Christian Bautista on March 04, 2005, 8:00 PM at the Araneta Coliseum (for Metro Manila, Cavite, Laguna, Rizal and Bulacan outlets only)
- o A "Colour Everywhere" CD featuring songs from Christian Bautista
- o 1 piece Rainbow Choco Rings
- o 4 pieces Munchkins
- o 1 poster of Christian Bautista

• Promo period is from February 17 to March 19, 2005.
• See posters for details.

with:
Rachelle Ann Go
17:28
Playshop Kids

and our very special guest:
Gary Valenciano

directed by: Audie Gemora

ARANETA COLISEUM
www.aranetacoliseum.com

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0354, Series of 2005

SM City Pampanga, Southmall hold big 3-day sale

Peso power spreads north and south as SM City Pampanga in San Fernando and SM Southmall Las Piñas offer spectacular values during their simultaneous 3-day sale on March 4, 5 and 6.

BIG BIG DISCOUNTS AT BOTH MALLS

Shoppers can take their pick from a wide selection of apparel, fashion, accessories, home and office furniture and decor, IT gadgets, big and small appliances, novelty items, hardware tools and many more at up to 50% price breaks at participating establishments.

MALL HOURS ARE FROM 10 AM TO 10 PM, MARCH 4, 5 AND 6.

CELEBRATE THE GOOD TIMES AT SM PAMPANGA FIESTA STRIP

Choose from an array of delectable food choices against a backdrop of feel-good music.

Gerry's Grill offers tempting Filipino fare. **Sushi-Ya** serves Japanese Cuisine. **Mini Shabu Shabu** specializes in seafood delicacies. **Northern Brew** serves coffee and pasta.

up to 50% off

great selection mallwide

3day sale

march 4.5.6

SM SOUTHMALL LAS PIÑAS

Get a chance to

WIN

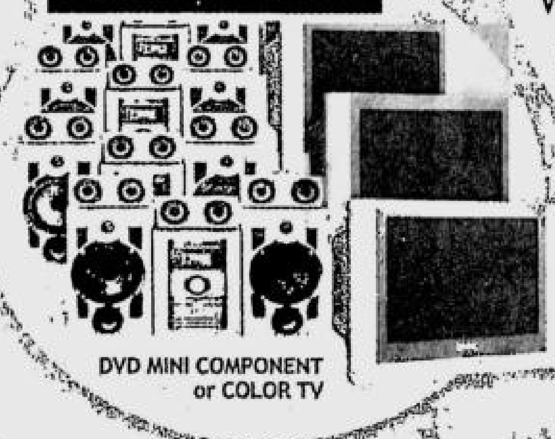
appliance prizes

with every P500 single or accumulated purchase at SM Department Store, SM Supermarket or at any participating mall establishments.

mall hours:
10am - 10pm

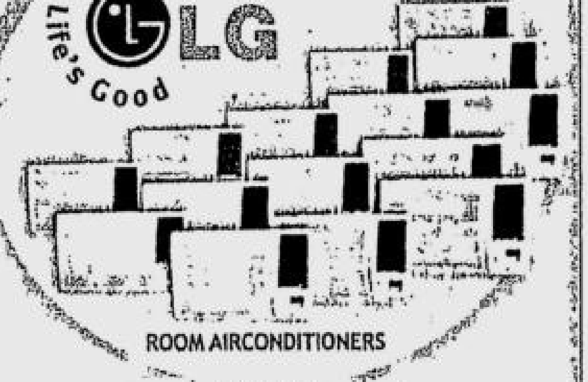
See mechanics posters for details.

SM City PAMPANGA



DVD MINI COMPONENT
or COLOR TV

LG Life's Good



ROOM AIRCONDITIONERS

Per DTI-NOR Permit No. A2-113 Series of 2005

Per DTI-PGA Permit No. 026 Series of 2005

EXCITING RAFFLE PRIZES & FREEBIES

SM CITY PAMPANGA

Every P500 single or accumulated purchase (cash or charge) at SM Department Store, SM Supermarket, SM Foodcourt or any participating mall tenants entitles shopper to one (1) raffle coupon. Shoppers earn an additional raffle coupon upon presentation of the 3-day sale leaflet with their proof of purchase.

- **SM Cinema** Shoppers earn one (1) raffle coupon for every single purchase of three cinema tickets. Additionally, purchase of two movie tickets entitles customer to one free Cheeky Curls or People Fish Crackers.
- **SM FoodCourt** For an additional P1.00, a customer can get an extra 12 oz. Iced Tea for every purchase of Nestea Combo Meal. Offer is good only during the 3-day sale.

  In addition, every P100 purchase with 16oz Nestea drink entitles customer to one (1) raffle coupon for a chance to win cellphones. Raffle draw will be held every two weeks, now until March 13, 2005.
- **Amusement Center** Every P100 single purchase of tokens entitles a shopper to one raffle coupon.

SM CITY PAMPANGA PRIZES

A total of 15 units of LG 1.5 hp Room Air Conditioners are at stake. 5 units are raffled off everyday from March 4 to 6.

SM SOUTHMALL LAS PIÑAS

Every P500 single or accumulated purchase (cash or charge) at SM Department Store, SM Supermarket or from any participating establishment, entitles shopper to one (1) raffle coupon.

- **SM Foodcourt** Customer gets one (1) raffle coupon for every P150 single or accumulated purchase.
- **SM Cinema** Customer gets one (1) raffle coupon for every single purchase of four (4) cinema tickets.
- **Amusement Centers** Customer gets one (1) raffle coupon for every P100 single purchase of tickets / tokens.

Prizes at Stake

4 units MHC-GN90D - Sony DVD Mini Component

4 units AR212N60 - Sony 53.34CM(21") Color Television

Raffle draw will be held daily on March 4, 5 and 6, 2005, 10 pm at the Upper Ground Floor, Centermall.

Lucky winners will be drawn and announced on each of the specified dates of the sale period.

March 4, 2005 - Friday- 2 winners
1 winner - Sony DVD Mini Component
1 winner - Sony 53.34 cm (21") Color TV

March 5, 2005 - Saturday - 2 winners
1 winner - Sony DVD Mini Component
1 winner - Sony 53.34 cm (21") Color TV

March 6, 2005 - Sunday - 4 winners
2 winners - Sony DVD Mini Component
2 winners - Sony 53.34 cm (21") Color TV

SM ARENA

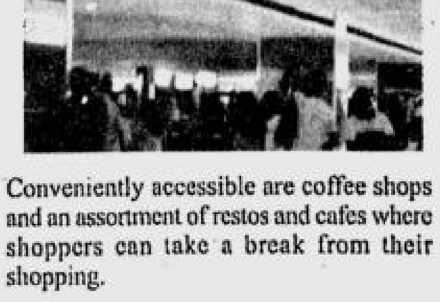
Fast becoming the shopping destination of sports buffs, SM Arena on level 2 is built like a racetrack. It carries a complex of stores carrying sportswear, sports gadgets and exercise machines. Among the area's main attractions are the **mini bowling alley** and the popular **Wall Climbing**.

SM ESCAPE

For those on the lookout for great shopping finds in fashion, SM Escape on level 3 has boutiques showcasing the latest trends in apparel and accessories.

CYBERZONE

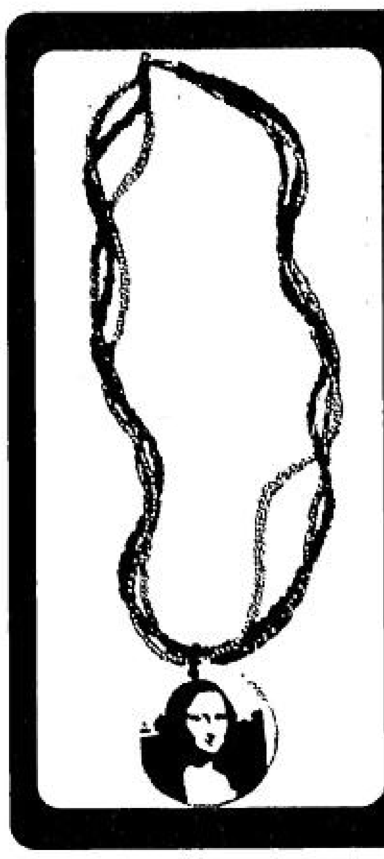
Techno savvy comes of age at SM Southmall's Cyberzone, the latest tech hub in town. Here, one can get wired to the latest I.T. gadgets and gizmos or get addicted to the hottest mobile phones.



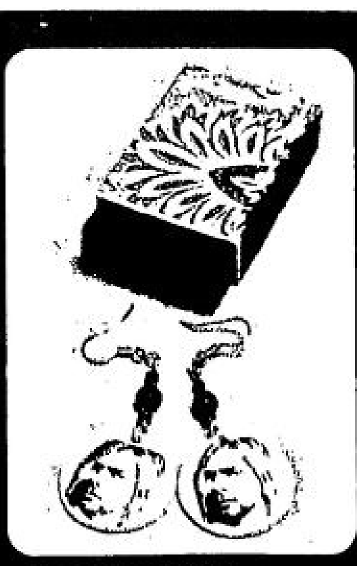
Conveniently accessible are coffee shops and an assortment of restos and cafes where shoppers can take a break from their shopping.

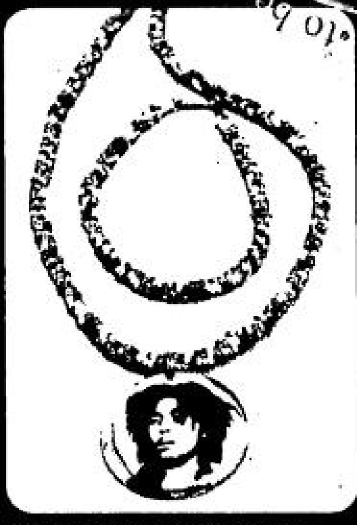
SM ICE SKATING RINK

Summer's upon us and the days are really starting to sizzle. As a special treat, the Rink is giving Southmall patrons a chance to win one of 15 SHREK 2 VCDs. Every two(2) Unlimited ICE Time tickets purchased from March 4 to 13 gives skaters a chance to join the raffle.

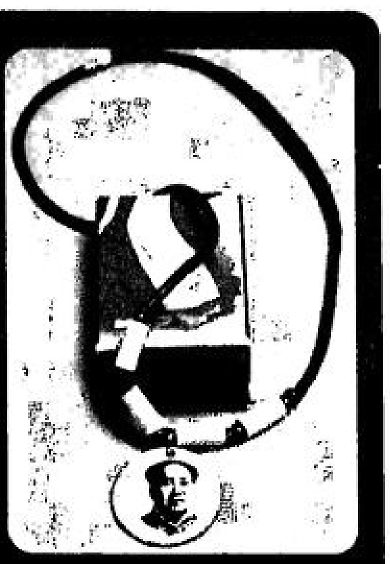

MONA LISA, Mona Lisa, Mona Lisa necklace, P250

NOT SALMA. The real Frida Kahlo necklace, P250


ALL APOLOGIES. Kurt Cobain earrings, P125


NO WOMAN, NO CRY. Bob Marley necklace and bracelet set, P225

BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S. Audrey Hepburn necklace, P225


MAO TSE TUNG necklace, P175

Wear your ICON

Text by Pam Pastor
Photos by Raffy Lerma

WHO'S your icon? Madonna? Cher? Bob Marley? Audrey Hepburn? Michael Jordan?

Twenty-three-year-old Mimi Tecson creates icon-themed jewelry.

"It started as an artistic venture rather than creating a brand. I just wanted to create accessories for me to wear. I learned the technique of transferring images from my boyfriend who is a painter. Then I realized that I can use the same technique in my accessories."

Her first creation was a pair of Bob Marley earrings which she wore to an event. People kept noticing them. "That gave me the idea of doing more stuff with different icons."

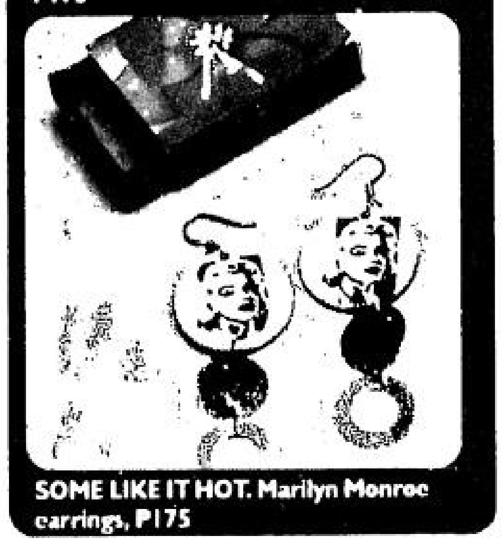
Inspired by pop art, her sisters and the lives of different icons, she started creating more and more pieces. In the future, Mimi also hopes to get started on bags and shirts. "All the icons that I place in my accessories are people who have in some way made a difference in my life, through their art, music and films."

For inquiries and orders, call or e-mail Mimi at 0919-3566493 or painted1981@yahoo.com

MUSIC ICONS. Janis Joplin and Bob Marley bracelets

MY FAIR LADY. Audrey Hepburn earrings, P125

CRAZY FOR YOU. Madonna earrings, P175


SOME LIKE IT HOT. Marilyn Monroe earrings, P175

43 schools...wireless applications development... who will emerge the most innovative of them all?

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SMART WIRELESS ENGINEERING EDUCATION PROGRAM

INNOVATION & EXCELLENCE AWARDS

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Batangas State University · Bulacan State University · Cagayan State University · Don Bosco Technological Center · FEATI University
Fullbright College, Inc · Holy Angel University · Holy Cross of Davao College · Holy Name University · Mariano Marcos University
Mindanao State College-Iligan Institute of Technology · New Era University · Northwestern University · Notre Dame of Marbel University
Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology · Polytechnic University of the Philippines - Manila · Polytechnic University of the Philippines - Maragondon
St. Mary's University · Systems Plus Computer College Foundation · Tarlac State University · Technological University of the Philippines - Cavite
Technological University of the Philippines - Manila · Technological University of the Philippines - Visayas · Telecommunications Office Training Institute
University of Baguio · University of Cebu-Banilad Campus · University of Cebu-Main Campus · University of Makati ·
University of Negros Occidental-Recoletos · University of Northeastern Philippines · University of San Agustin · University of San Carlos
University of Southeastern Philippines · University of St. La Salle · Wesleyan University of the Philippines - Cabanatuan City
Western Visayas College of Science and Technology · Xavier University · Zamboanga AE Colleges-Sibugay

5/F Building B, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City
Megatrade Hall I, March 4 and 5, 2005
10 am to 9pm

Don't miss these hip activities!
- Visit the SWEEP finalists' wireless applications exhibits
- Cheer for your favorite PalaECEpan Quiz Bee Team
- Attend for free Microsoft Office Powertips seminar on MS Word, MS Excel & MS Powerpoint
- Join guild wars of Khan Online at Netopia Net Cafe
- Catch Nyoy Volante at the afternoon variety show
- Jam with The Mongols & other cool bands
- Win mobile phones or one year wireless broadband connection

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Present valid school ID
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type SWEEP <your name> <your address> <your school/company> and send it to 700888
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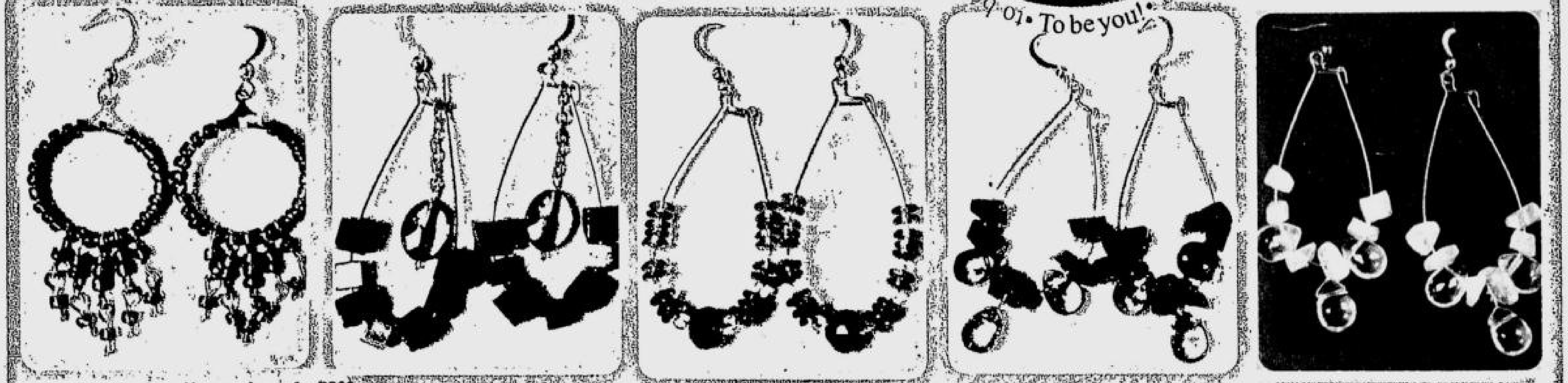
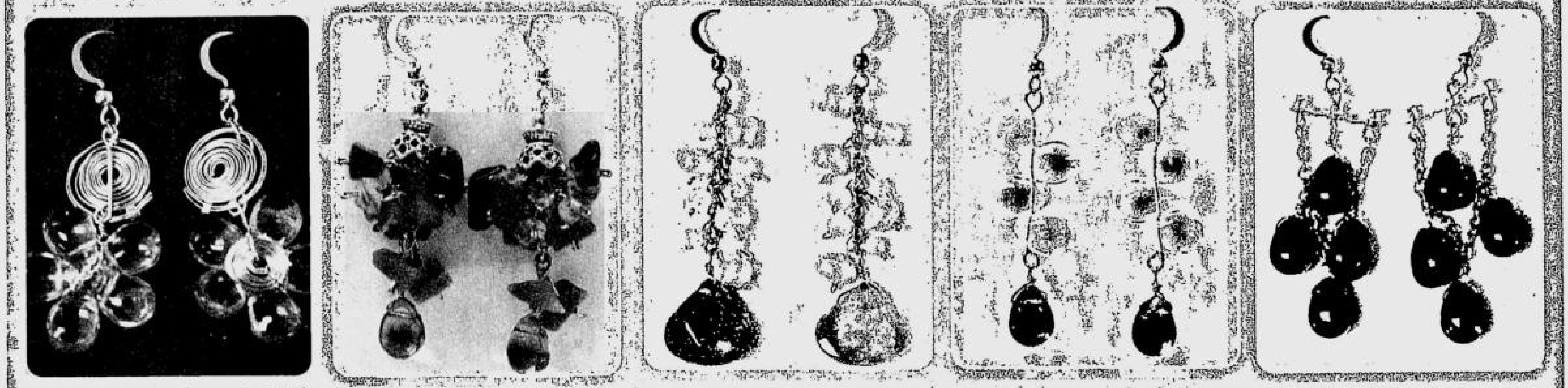
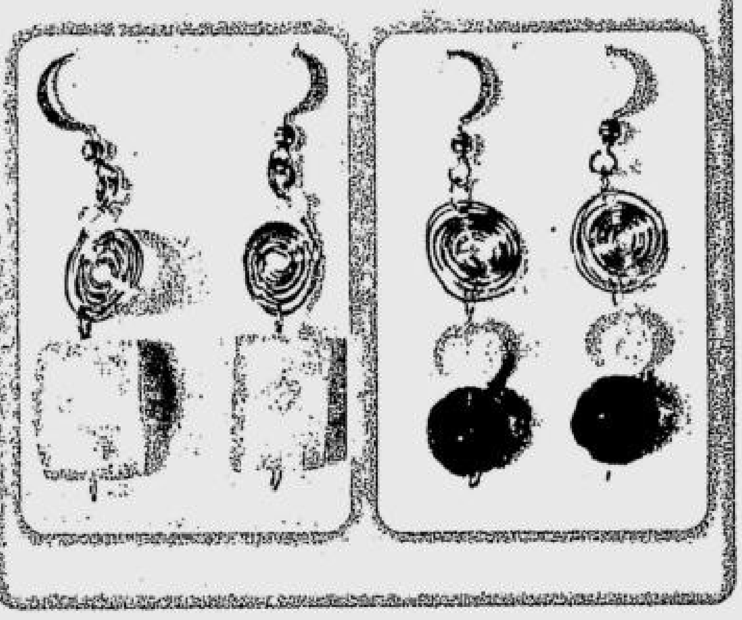


EARRINGS by Cara. Hoop styles go for P200



WHILE dangling earrings go for P250

Eyecandy for your ears



Text by Kristine Ching
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Rudy Esperas

EARRINGS sure can do wonders to a girl's wardrobe. It can save one's face after a failed attempt of reconstructing Nicole Kidman's Oscar's makeup. It is a school girl's fashion expression since nothing much can be done to the uniform.

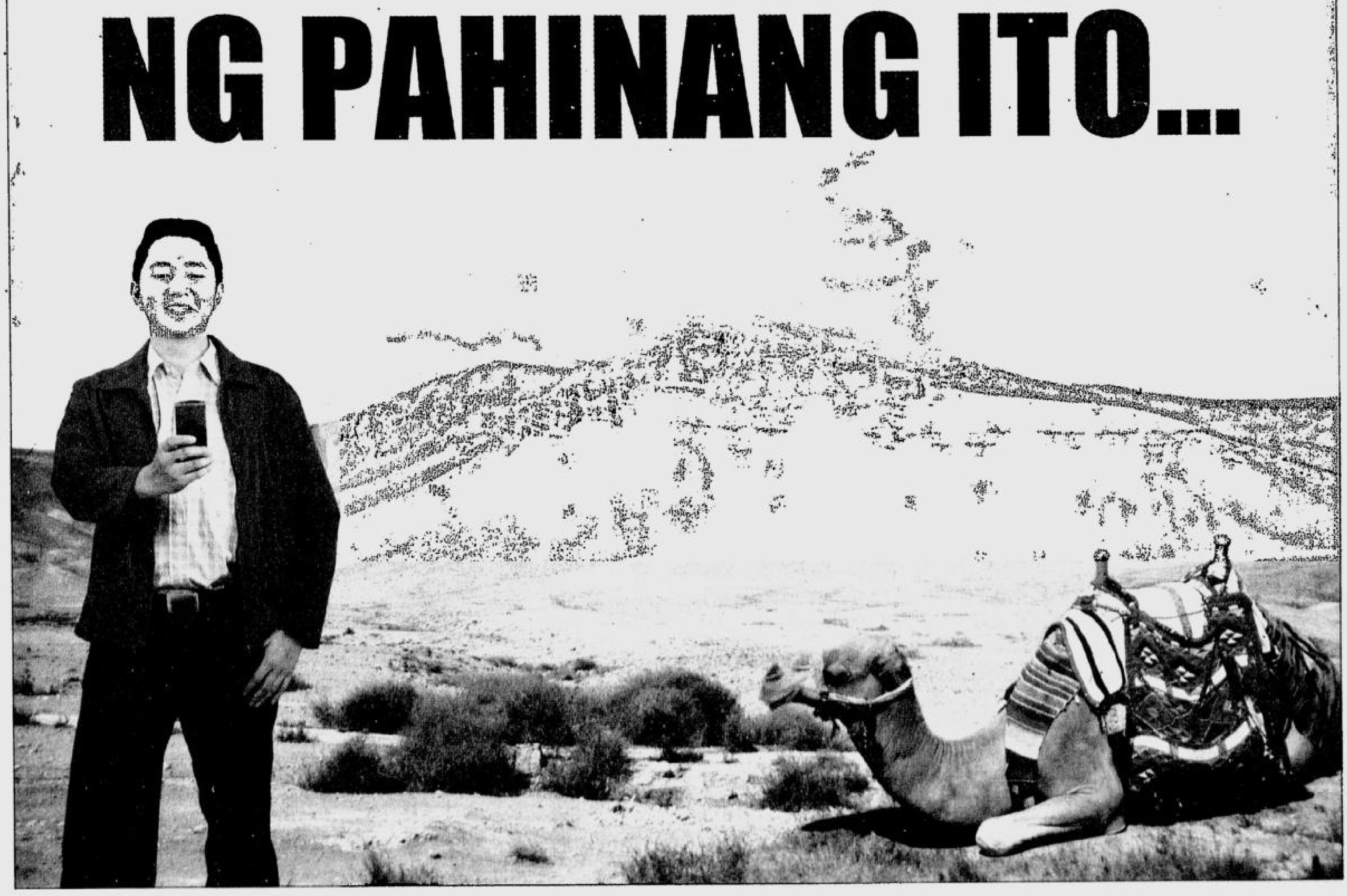
It keeps you from going nuts after screaming on the inside, "I gotta wear accessories!" because necklaces will surely have a catfight with your ruffled top. Here's the problem, unique and fashionable earrings are hard to find in this age of mass production.

Not anymore! Cara Gadi designs and makes earrings for anyone who wants to evoke fun. It's not a surprise that Cara stays away from neutral colors (unless the clients ask for it). Instead, she mixes and matches colors and material—from pearls, precious stones, glass beads and wire works—making her pieces stand out. Prices are reasonable at P200-300, but it can go up to P500-800 for special event (prom, debut, etc.) earrings. It all depends on the material used or the budget that the client sets.

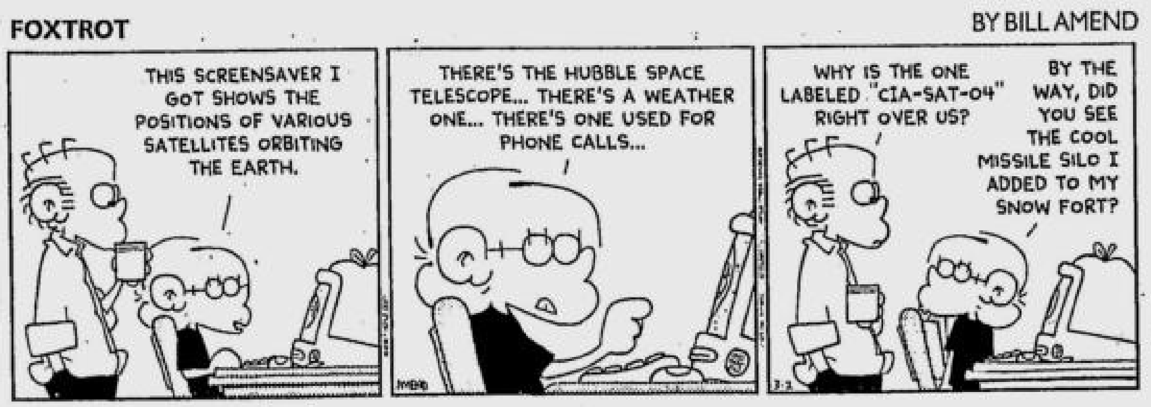
This accidental entrepreneur is an architect that was looking for another creative outlet. Cara started out by making earrings for herself. Her friend was impressed by her works, decided to feature it in a magazine.

For orders: Call or text Cara Gadi at 0927-7247446 or e-mail at cgadi@hotmail.com

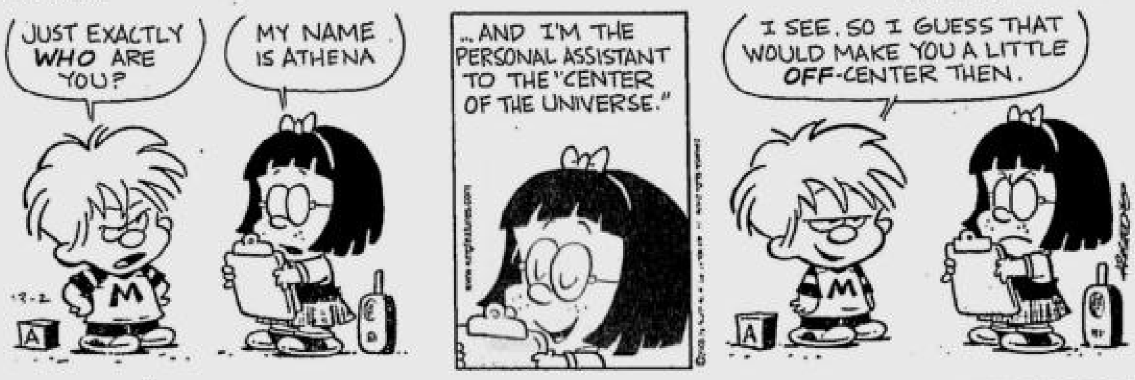
SA PNB RAPID REMIT,
PAGLIPAT MO
NG PAHINANG ITO...



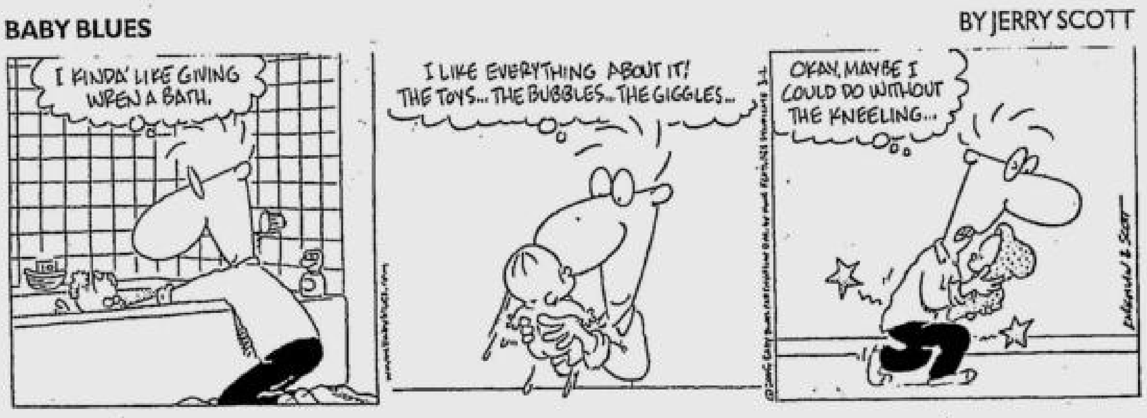
FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND


THIS SCREENSAVER I GOT SHOWS THE POSITIONS OF VARIOUS SATELLITES ORBITING THE EARTH.
THERE'S THE HUBBLE SPACE TELESCOPE... THERE'S A WEATHER ONE... THERE'S ONE USED FOR PHONE CALLS...
WHY IS THE ONE LABELED "CIA-SAT-04" RIGHT OVER US?
BY THE WAY, DID YOU SEE THE COOL MISSILE SILO I ADDED TO MY SNOW FORT?

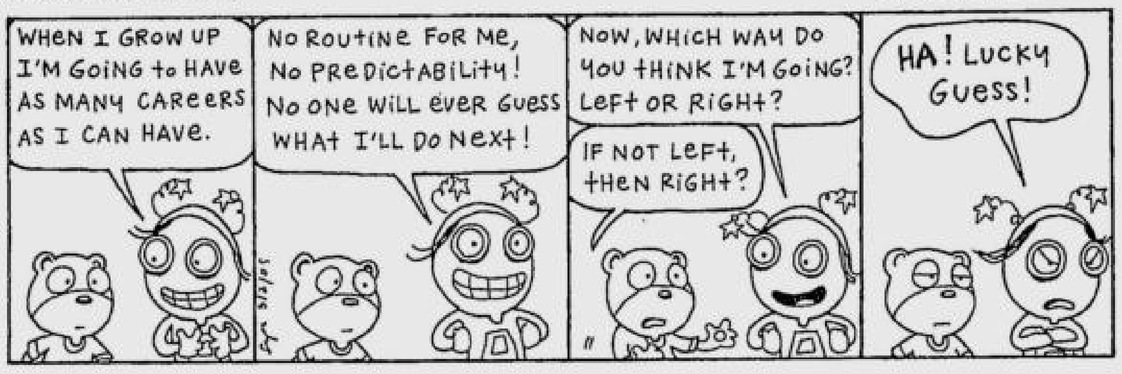
MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG


JUST EXACTLY WHO ARE YOU?
MY NAME IS ATHENA
...AND I'M THE PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO THE "CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE."
I SEE. SO I GUESS THAT WOULD MAKE YOU A LITTLE OFF-CENTER THEN.

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


I KINDA' LIKE GIVING WREN A BATH.
I LIKE EVERYTHING ABOUT IT! THE TOYS... THE BUBBLES... THE GIGGLES...
OKAY, MAYBE I COULD DO WITHOUT THE KNEELING...

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


WHEN I GROW UP I'M GOING TO HAVE AS MANY CAREERS AS I CAN HAVE.
NO ROUTINE FOR ME, NO PREDICTABILITY! NO ONE WILL EVER GUESS WHAT I'LL DO NEXT!
NOW, WHICH WAY DO YOU THINK I'M GOING? LEFT OR RIGHT?
IF NOT LEFT, THEN RIGHT?
HA! LUCKY GUESS!

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're extremely observant. You're also persistent and careful. You're very loyal to friends and family. Personally, you're not afraid to express your individuality. You work very hard at your craft. Sometimes you are overcommitted in too many areas. An important choice awaits you in the year ahead. (Choose wisely.)

Birthdate of: Jon Bon Jovi, musician; John Irving, novelist; Tom Wolfe, author.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Your ambition knows no bounds . Be careful that you don't trample over others in your attempt to succeed at something. Nothing is worth that.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You're determined to make travel plans or to go somewhere today. Similarly, you might have big ideas about returning to school or taking courses. This is probably a good idea.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You feel generous, especially to romantic interests and children. You might also want to sponsor the arts in some way. Just don't go overboard.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Someone is doing things in a very big way at home. It might be you; it might be another family member. Enjoy good times. (If you drink, don't drive.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You can get an enormous amount done at work today. You're in the mood to give it your best shot. You will work tirelessly for long hours and feel a great sense of satisfaction afterward.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You want to have fun today! Everything having to do with love affairs, romance, parties, entertaining diversions and the arts gets a big boost today! You're happy.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You're very ambitious to make some changes at home today. Be careful that you don't go overboard spending money on a family member or something new for your home. It's easy to be excessive today.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You're full of high energy today! Just be careful that you don't act recklessly. Think twice before you speak. Don't make big promises to others.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You might want to leave your money at home today. Be careful shopping. You're really ready to spend in a big way. (Keep your receipts, to be safe.)

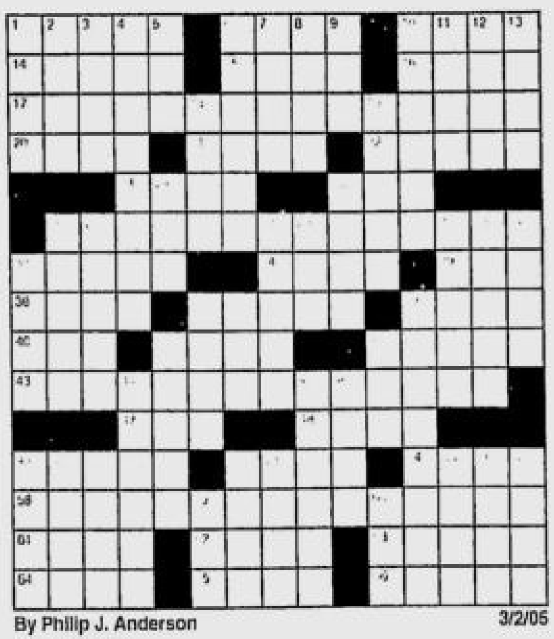
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Get out and enjoy some physical exercise. You're bursting with energy today! You might want to convince someone about something. If so, you'll do it!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You can get a lot done today by working alone. You feel energetic, almost driven, but private at the same time. Discussions with those in foreign countries or faraway places will please you.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): This is a wonderful day to get together with friends and groups. You delight in the company of others. People want to see you as well!

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Doorway sides
6 Dutch cheese
10 Neuwirth of "Chicago"
14 Wickerwork willow
15 Astronauts' grp.
16 Curvy molding
17 Lion
20 Actor Morales
21 Singer McCann
22 Dispatch
23 At one's elbow
25 Total
26 Dog
33 Brain sections
34 Family man
35 __ Dawn Chong
36 Hebrew month
37 Palm leaf
39 Enthusiastic opinion
40 N.Y. opera house
41 Ship's pole
42 Small specks
43 Eagle
47 Wee crawler
48 Focal points
49 Sufficient
52 "The Virginian" writer Wister
54 W.S. seminal
58 Camel
61 Ex-mayor of NYC
62 At the summit of
63 Book before Joel
64 Fast jets: abbr.
65 Male turkeys
66 Villainous look

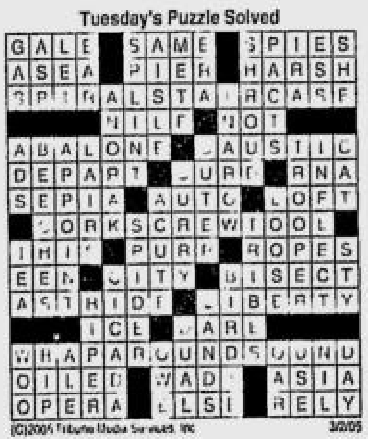


By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR

3/2/05

DOWN
1 Bit of humor
2 Flea market caveat
3 Ancient Greek weight
4 Tyro
5 Full-house sign
6 Whole
7 Willie Wonka's creator
8 On the ocean
9 Music abbr.
10 Ajax competitor
11 Chicken products
12 Pants support
13 Extra-wide shoe size
18 Love handles
19 "Star Trek" character
24 Serpentine curve
25 Nob Hill cops: abbr.
26 Computer communicator
27 Lessen
28 Sees
29 Light brown
30 Muse of verse
31 Orange variety
32 Sandra and Ruby
33 Tibetan monk
37 Bit of info
38 Pretoria's nation: abbr.
39 Mr. Crusoe
41 "Rebel Without a Cause" co-star
42 CCX x X
44 Kiner and Ellison
45 Visits dreamland
46 Distant, once
49 Inquires
50 Units of conductance
51 Ancient Brit
52 Bologna eight
53 "For __ the Bell Tolls"
55 __-majesty
56 Canadian tribe
57 Lead player
59 Obese
60 Interrogative sounds

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved



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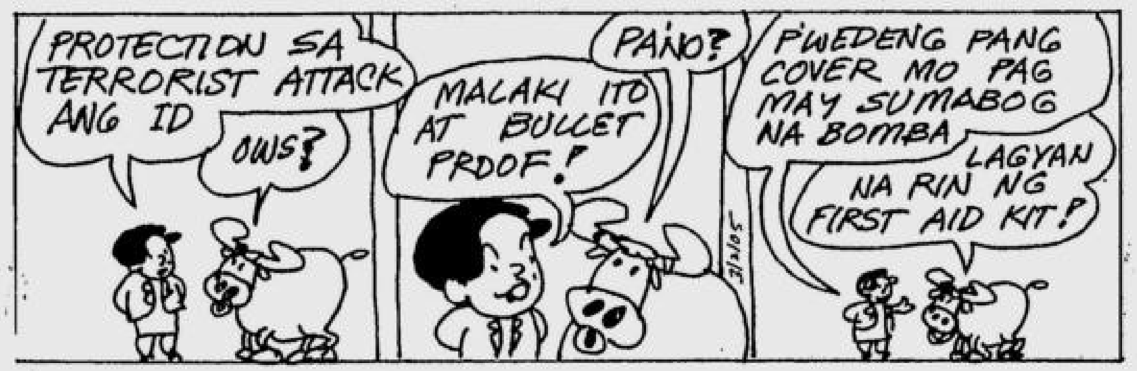
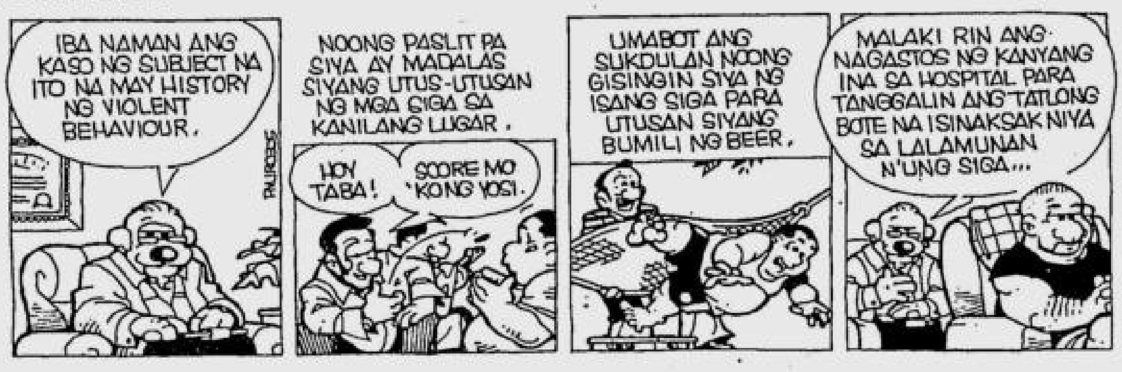
3/2/05

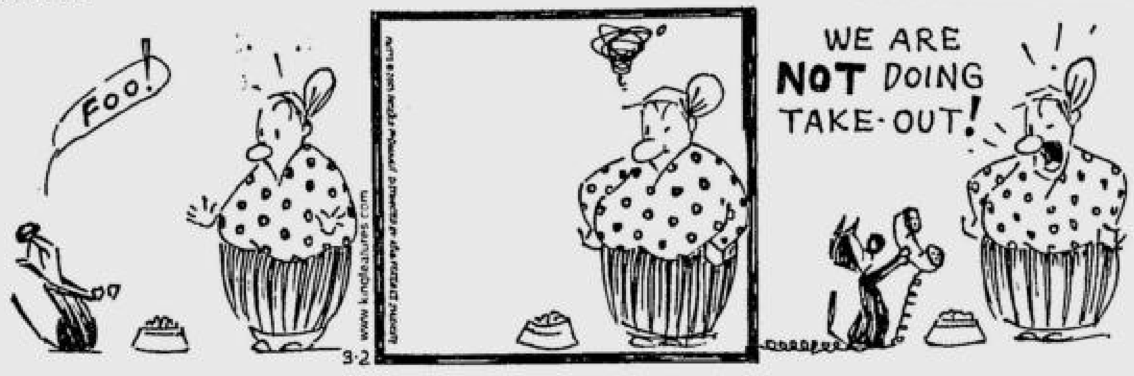
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


PROTECTION SA TERRORIST ATTACK ANG ID
OWS?
MALAKI ITO AT BULLET PROOF!
PANO?
P'WEDENG PANG COVER MO PAG MAY SUMABOG NA BOMBA
LAGYAN NA RIN NG FIRST AID KIT!

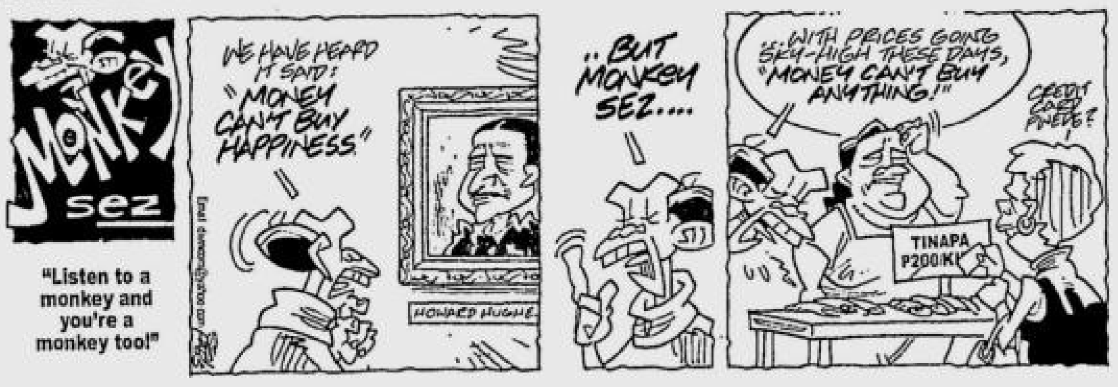
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


IBA NAMAN ANG KASO NG SUBJECT NA ITO NA MAY HISTORY NG VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR.
NOONG PASLIT PA SIYA AY MADALAS SIYANG UTUS-UTUSAN NG MGA SIGA SA KANILANG LUGAR.
HOY TABA!
SCORE MO 'KONG YOSI.
UMABOT ANG SUKDULAN NOONG GISINGIN SIYA NG ISANG SIGA PARA UTUSAN SIYANG BUMILI NG BEER.
MALAKI RIN ANG NAGASTOS NG KANYANG INA SA HOSPITAL PARA TANGGALIN ANG TATLONG BOTE NA ISINAKSAK NIYA SA LALAMUNAN N'UNG SIGA...

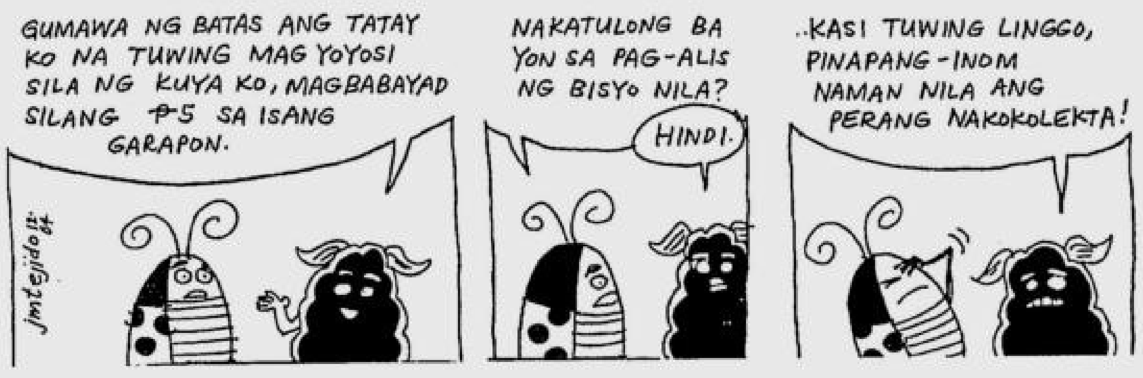
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


FOO!
WE ARE NOT DOING TAKE-OUT!

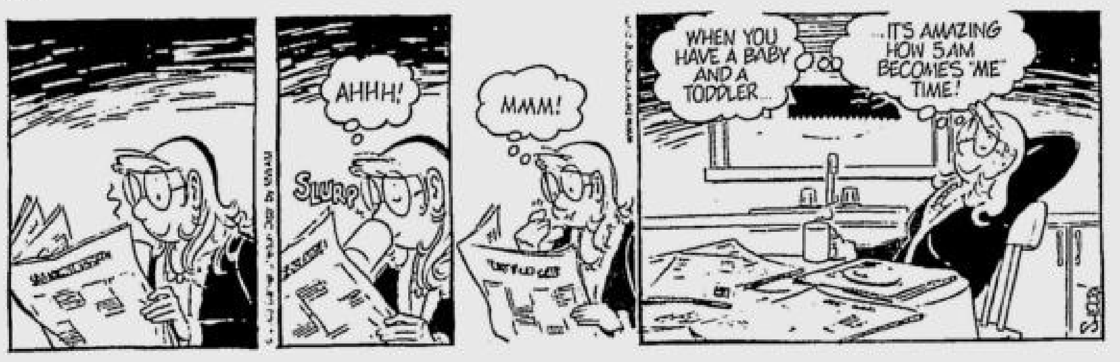
DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


MONKEY sez
"Listen to a monkey and you're a monkey too!"
WE HAVE HEARD IT SAID: "MONEY CAN'T BUY HAPPINESS."
HOWARD HUGHE
..BUT MONKEY SEZ....
..WITH PRICES GOING SKY-HIGH THESE DAYS, "MONEY CAN'T BUY ANYTHING!"
CREDIT CARD PWEDE?
TINAPA P200/KL

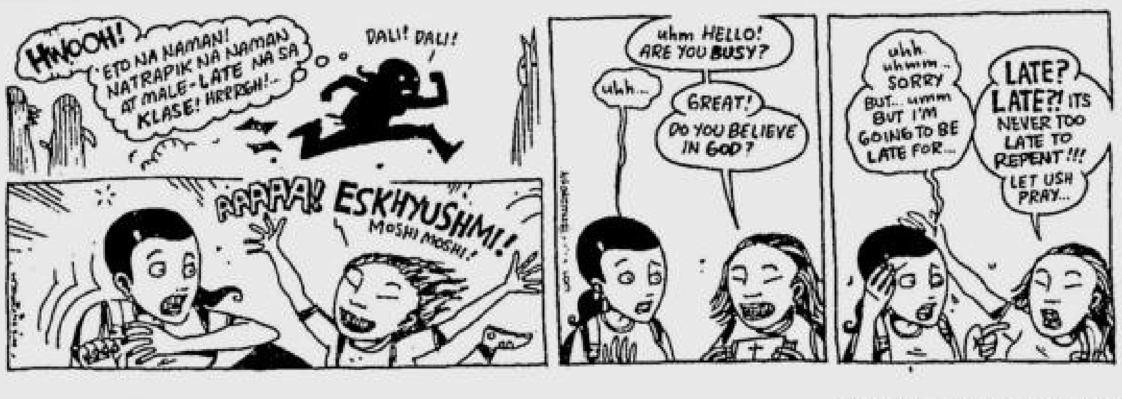
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


GUMAWA NG BATAS ANG TATAY KO NA TUWING MAG YOYOSI SILA NG KUYA KO, MAGBABAYAD SILANG ₱5 SA ISANG GARAPON.
NAKATULONG BA YON SA PAG-ALIS NG BISYO NILA?
HINDI.
..KASI TUWING LINGGO, PINAPANG-INOM NAMAN NILA ANG PERANG NAKOKOLEKTA!

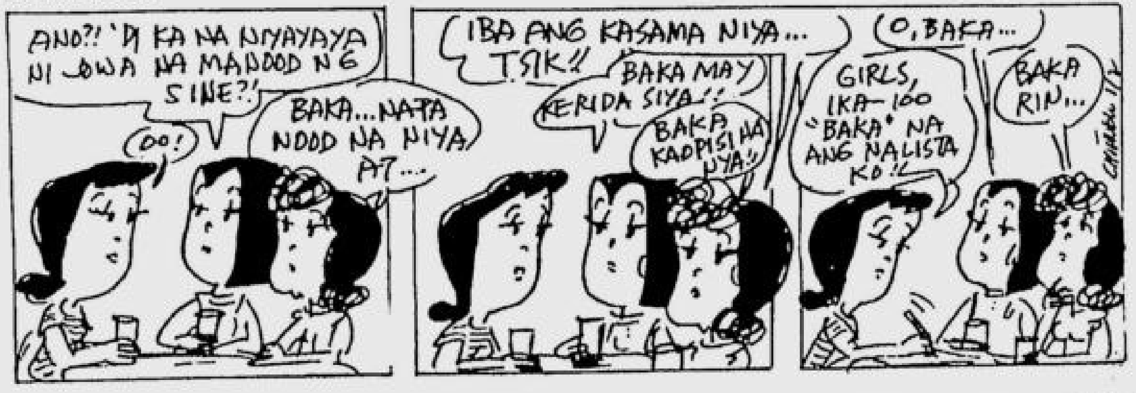
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


AHHH!
SLURP
MMM!
WHEN YOU HAVE A BABY AND A TODDLER...
...IT'S AMAZING HOW 5AM BECOMES "ME" TIME!

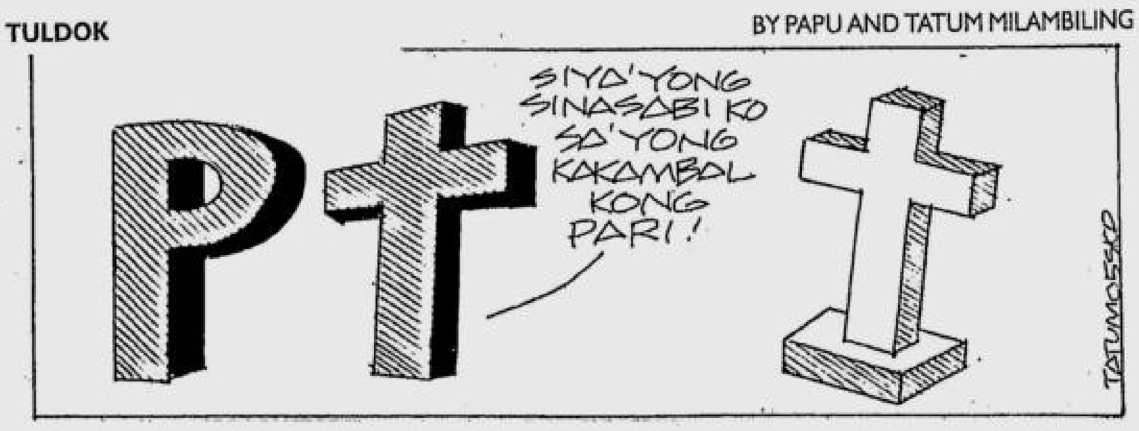
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA

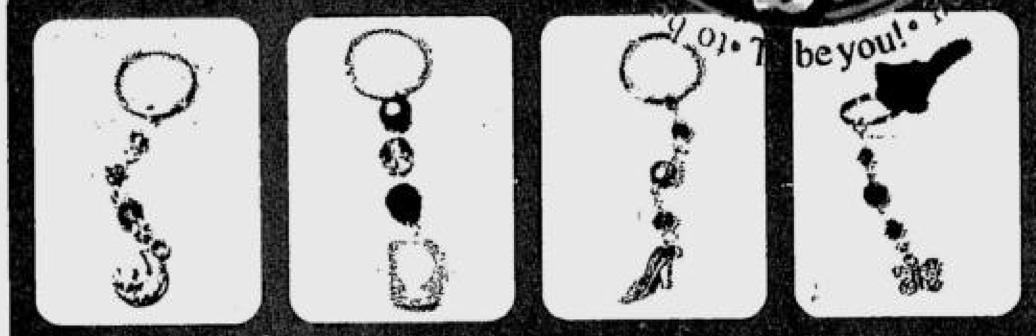

HWOOH! 'ETO NA NAMAN! NATRAPIK NA NAMAN AT MALE-LATE NA SA KLASE! HRRRGH!..
DALI! DALI!
RAAAA! ESKHYUSHMI! MOSHI MOSHI!
uhm HELLO! ARE YOU BUSY?
uhh...
GREAT! DO YOU BELIEVE IN GOD?
uhh uhmm.. SORRY BUT... umm BUT I'M GOING TO BE LATE FOR...
LATE? LATE?! ITS NEVER TOO LATE TO REPENT!!! LET USH PRAY...

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

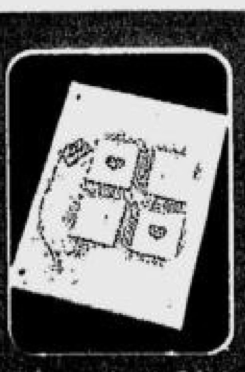

ANO?! 'DI KA NA NIYAYAYA NI JOWA NA MANOOD NG SINE?!
OO!
BAKA...NAPA NOOD NA NIYA AT...
IBA ANG KASAMA NIYA... TSK!!
BAKA MAY KERIDA SIYA!!
BAKA KADPISI NA NIYA!!
(O, BAKA...
GIRLS, IKA-100 "BAKA" NA ANG NALISTA KO!
BAKA RIN...

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

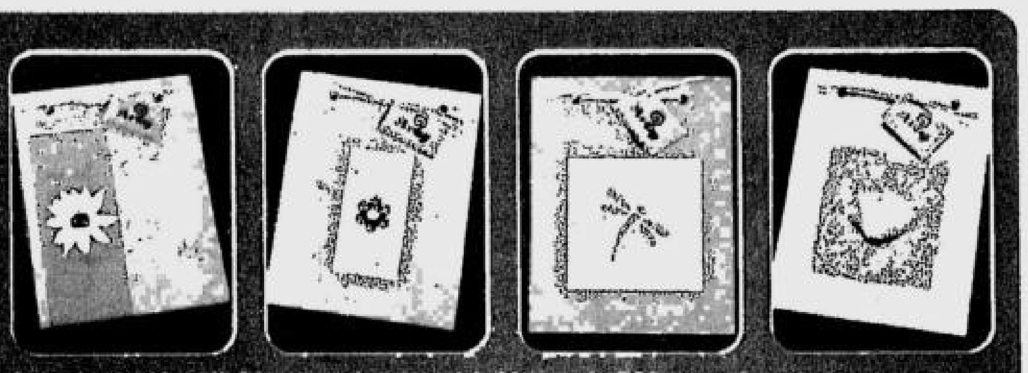

SIYA'YONG SINASABI KO SA'YONG KAKAMBAL KONG PARI!



KEYCHAIN with silver charm (P80), keychain with stone (P100)



BIG scrapbook, P280

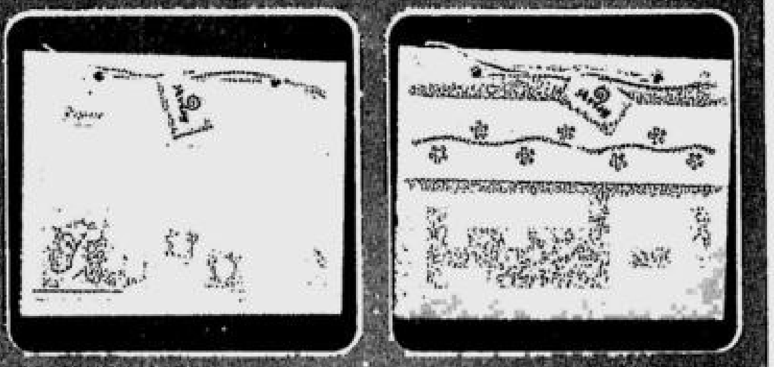


DRAGONFLY, shell, flowers - take your pick. Notepads, P80

Crafty creatures

ROSARY bracelets, P150

BRAIDED choker, P200



JOURNAL, P180

Badette and Marjess Amor are sisters who thrive on crafts and accessories

Text by Katrina Yap
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Joseph Agcaoili

AFTER working in the advertising industry for six years, 29-year-old Badette Amor decided to go back doing her first love—crafts.

Badette and her older sister, Marjess, have always had a knack for crafts. When they were younger, they made notepads and beaded accessories as gifts for friends or for personal use.

But with a little help from their mom, word-of-mouth turned a hobby into a lucrative business. And thus, the birth of Artsy Creatures.

Artsy Creatures was only a few months old when it got its first big break. The Dos Palmas Resort in Palawan loved its notepads and made a big order in 2003.

"We just sent them an e-mail and asking if they'd be interested, and they were," Badette says. Their first bulk order taught them the ropes of the business.

Badette describes the experience, "I underestimated the production time." With the deadline fast approaching, they had to enlist every family member to pitch in. "Everyone had to help out—my mom, even my sister's (Marjess') mother-in-law who was visiting from Davao during that time. My dad would package the notepads. Then my (younger) sister Joyce would also help," Badette recounts.

A year later, Badette and Marjess started doing the bazaar rounds, expanding their offerings to scrapbooks, journals, beaded key chains, bookmarks and rosary bracelets. It was then the sisters realized they really had a market for their items—teenage girls.

Badette recalls a particular customer who kept the compliments flowing. "She was like, 'Oh my gosh, I love your stuff! They're so artsy!'"

Bazaar darling

It was the bazaars that also brought in the big bucks. With transactions averaging at P3,000 per person, their earnings from just one bazaar reached six figures.

"And to think we only started with P5,000!" Badette says.

Fastest-selling at the bazaars are the journals, beaded bookmarks and key chains. The journals are embellished with beads, shells, bamboo, leaves, *abaca* and paper accents. The bookmarks and key rings meanwhile are decorated with beads, crystals, pearls, semi-precious stones and silver charms.

But the other items get their share of the attention, too. According to Badette, the scrapbooks and the rosaries appeal to the older age bracket.

Badette is particularly ecstatic about the rosaries, which are made of crystals, freshwater pearls, semi-precious stones and beads. She says she usually gets inquiries on them for wedding souvenirs.

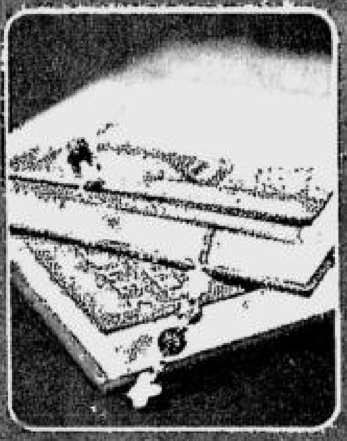
Interesting to note here is that nuns at a convent in Parañaque make the rosaries. Badette says, after all, they are the authority when it comes to rosaries. The nuns are so meticulous, they check every bead for damage, she says.

It suits her well—she is just as scrupulous. She and Marjess still create everything else by hand, so she is able to spot if something doesn't live up to her standards.

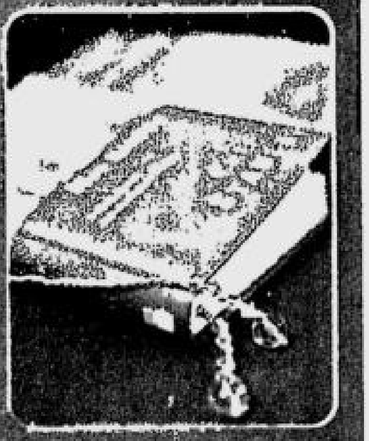
"It's hard though. There are just times you feel like giving up," she says. "Last Christmas, Marjess and I hardly slept just to fulfill an order." She says there may be a need to eventually hire people to work for them.

Badette is indeed very busy, but she knows the stress is part of growing the business. She doesn't want to rush. "I want to take it a step at a time." And really, she should. Her business is just two years old and already doing well.

Check out Artsy Creatures at www.artsycreatures.tk or e-mail artsycreatures@yahoo.com



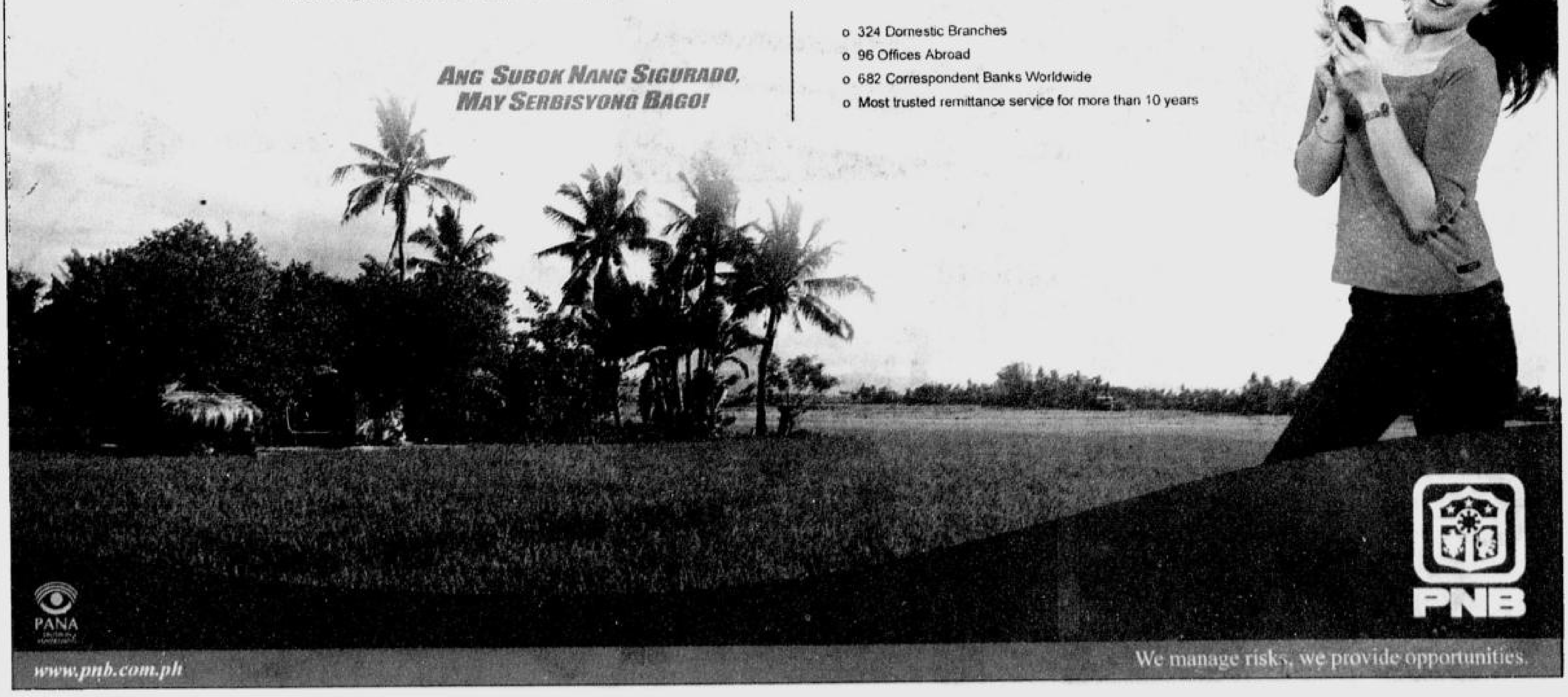
BOOKMARK, P80



BOOKMARK, P80

BOOKMARK, P80

PREMIUM bookmark, P125



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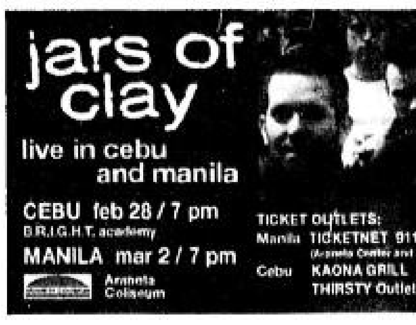
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CEBU feb 28 / 7 pm B.R.I.G.H.T. academy
MANILA mar 2 / 7 pm Araneta Coliseum
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THIRSTY Outlets (Ayala Mall)

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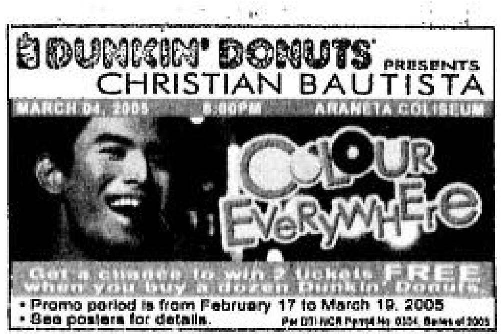
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• See posters for details.

Technology sweeping the nation

By Maui V. Reyes
2bU! Correspondent

IT'S a fact that the Philippines is one of the leaders in value-added short messaging services (SMS). So it's a no-brainer to get the youth involved in this worldwide phenomenon that is mobile communication.

The Smart Wireless Engineering Education Program (Sweep) is the brainchild of Smart Communications' Ronaldo G. Pena, It aims to educate students of electronic and communication engineering (ECE) by providing schools with laboratories equipped with past and present mobile technologies. The program will have Smart engineers giving lectures and making presentations for the faculty and students.

"Us Filipinos are always the first when it comes to coming up with new value-added services," Pena said. "When I went to France to meet with other mobile industry players, they always want to know about what's new in our industry."

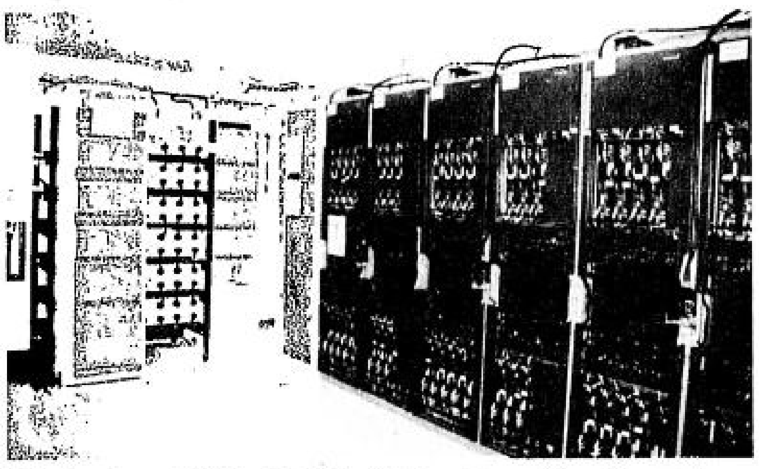
Smart doesn't want the youth to be left behind in this technology goldmine. With Sweep, students get to see first hand how the multi-billion industry was born and how it is operated.

Installing previous cellular equipment like AMPs (analogue), CDNA (digital), TACS (Total Access Communication System-remember those "Bill Crusher" ads back in the day?), and the newest, GSM, students get to experience how technology advances.

Since putting up its first laboratory at the Bulacan State University in March 2003, 43

TECHNOLOGY/ D2

"HEY, where's my pretty necklace?" Smart's Rolando Pena explains how the equipment works



NO, they're not high-tech student lockers. One of Smart's many wireless laboratories.

Smart comes up with a smart program for electronic and communication engineering students

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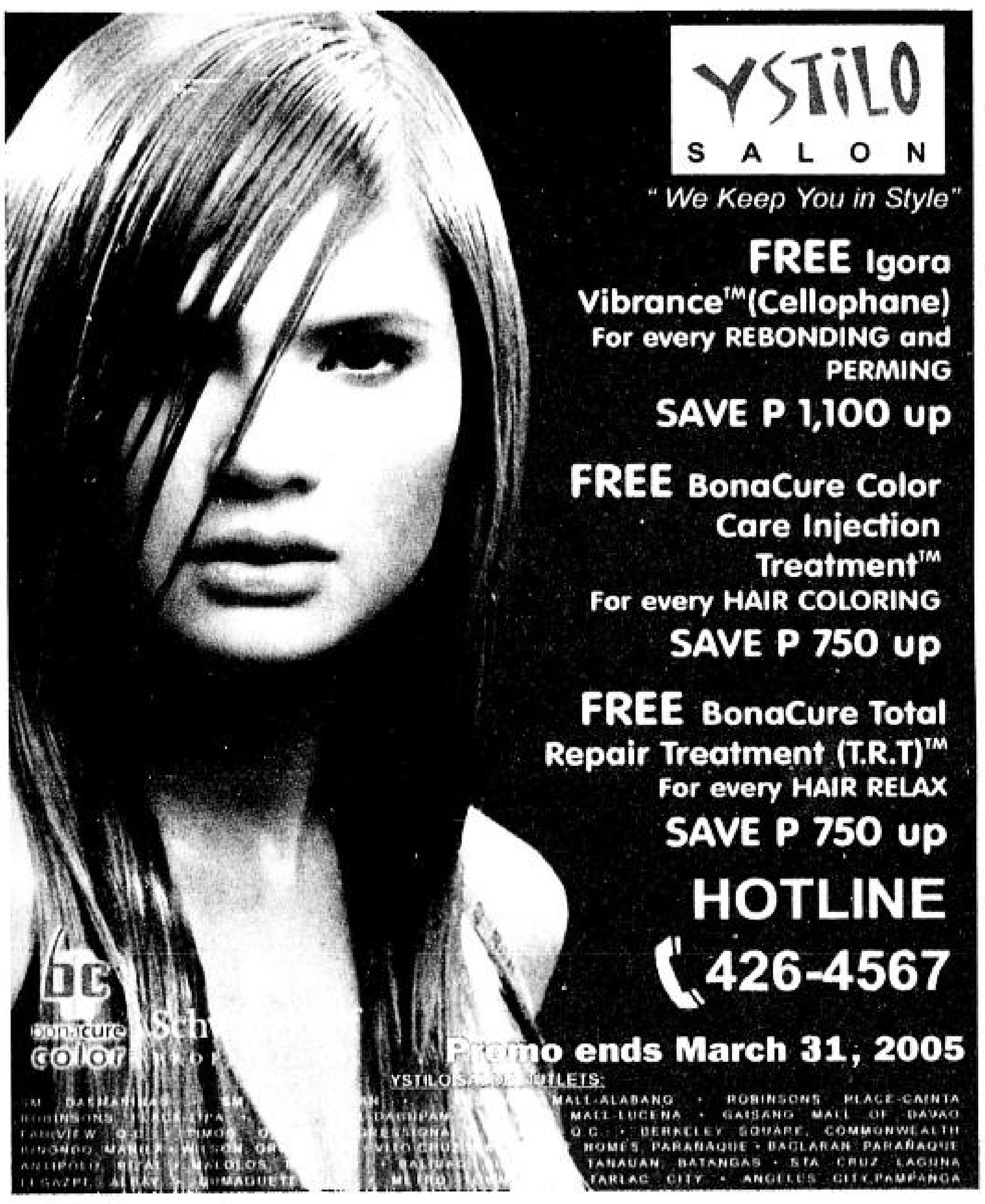
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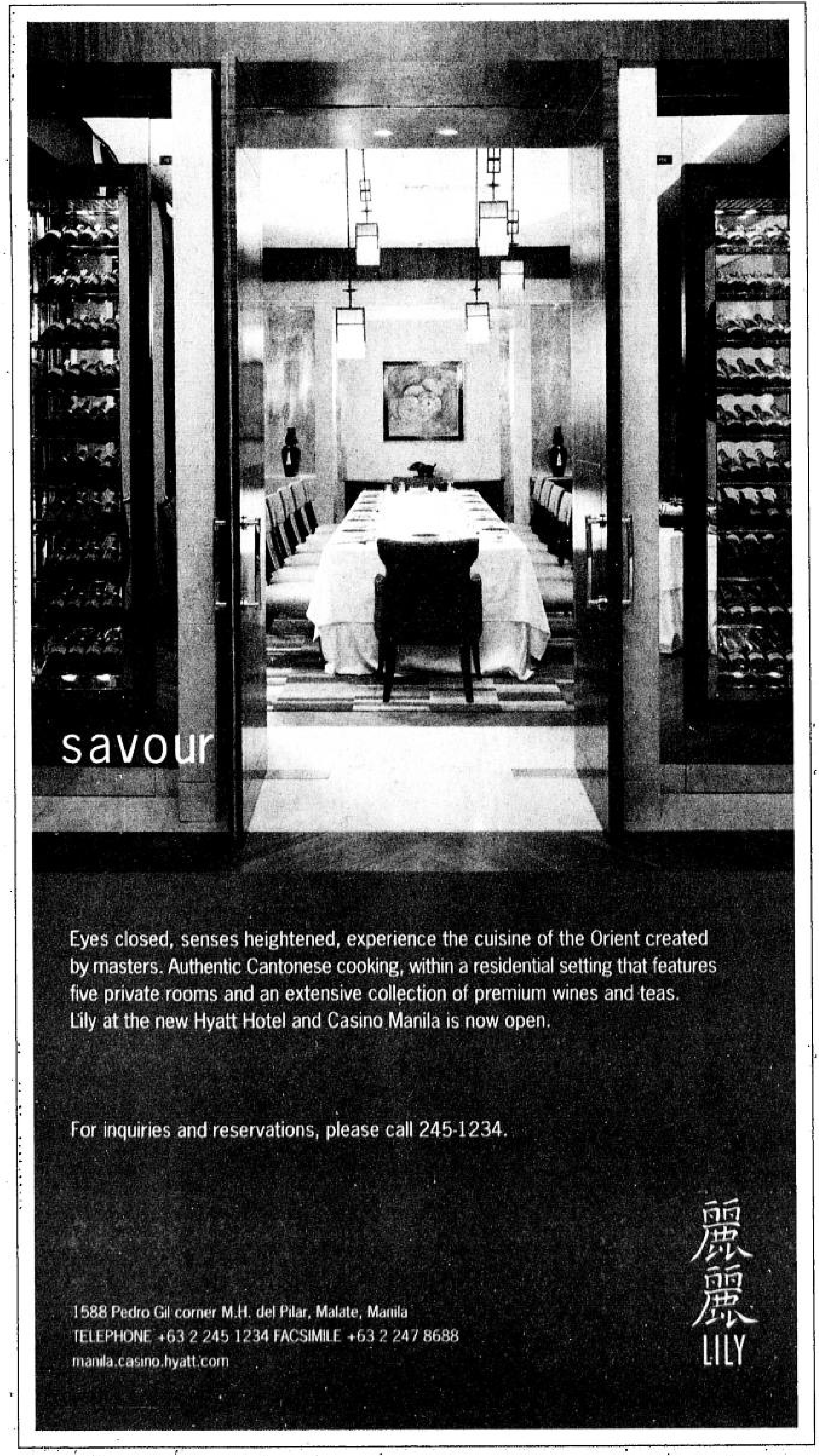
[illegible] TARLAC CITY • ANGELES CITY, PAMPANGA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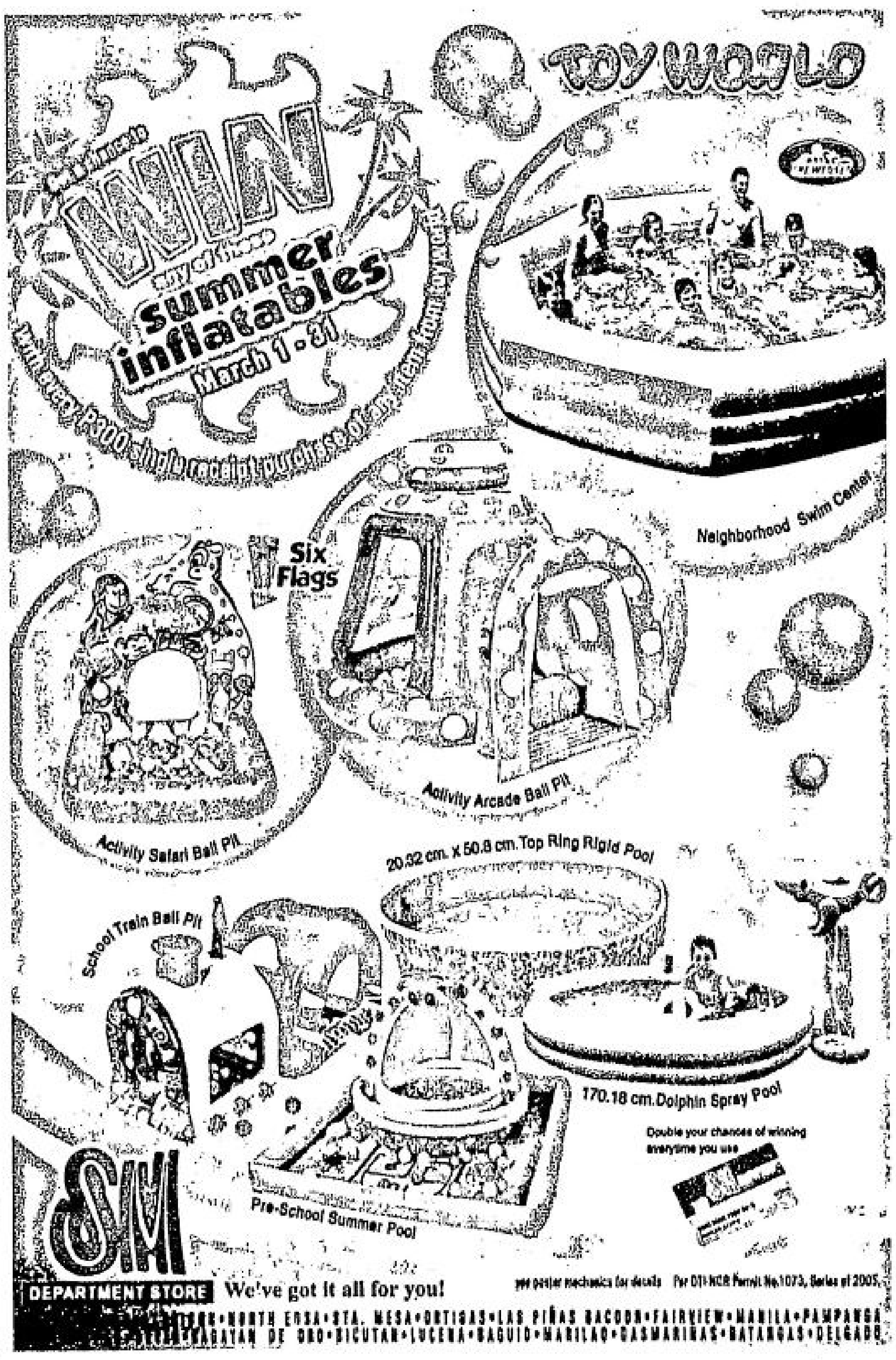
LILY



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see poster mechanics for details Per DTI-NCR Permit No.1073, Series of 2005.
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[illegible] CAGAYAN DE ORO • BICUTAN • LUCENA • BAGUIO • MARILAO • DASMARIÑAS • BATANGAS • DELGADO

Technology sweeping the nation

From page D1

other academic institutions have signed on to Sweep, and a total of 28 wireless laboratories are with 300 Smart-trained ECE professors educating students.

Creativity gets rewarded

Of course, what's the point of having access to such awesome equipment without getting to experiment with them?

Smart decided to award smart students across the country for their creative ideas that serve the community.

On March 4 and 5, the first Sweep Awards for Innovation and Excellence will be held at the Mega Trade Hall. There are 10 finalists among whom the Top 3 best services will be awarded. The first prize is P300,000, second is P200,000, and third is P100,000. On top of that, the winning schools will get grants of the same amount.

"Since the program was launched in March 2003, the schools have had a year and a half to learn and develop even more services," Pena said. "It's going to be exciting to see what the students came up with."

"If the service has some commercial value, then we'll probably strike a deal with them," he said. "I wouldn't be surprised if other telecoms approach them, as well. It's a great opportunity for these student engineers to flex their creative muscles and get jobs."

Brainiacs are also given a chance to show off their knowledge. A quiz contest, called "PalaECEpan", will be held, showcasing 34 schools vying for the regional title before moving on to the national round. Winners will receive P30,000 and a trophy. Regional winners and the national champion will get free cellular phones.

The winners will also get to check out the newest wireless technologies and see a concert featuring Stonefree and the Mongols.

Next step

According to Pena, many electronic engineers have been hired abroad and hold key positions in the industry. "Some of them are even being recruited while they are still in school," he said.

"The next step for us is to make an on-the-job training program for our engineering department," Pena said.

And since Smart is all about going wireless, hopeful students from the province need not travel all the way to Makati to experience working for Smart.

"They can do their job in the laboratories we've set up in schools, and we can do our correspondence there," Pena said. They will also have better chances of being hired by the company.

If you think you've missed out on your school's chance of being a Sweep partner, don't fret. Pena plans to make the Sweep Awards an annual event, which means Smart will be touching base with even more universities across the country. Each school is given a five-year renewable contract, which includes free equipment and assistance from SMART engineers.

Get in touch with Smart's public affairs office at 5113105, or send a letter of request to the Public Affairs Department, 8th Floor PLDT Wise, 6799 Ayala Avenue, Makati City 1226.

Be sure to check out the Sweep Awards at the Mega Trade Hall on March 4 and 5.

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GROUP hug.

San Agus wins Green invitationa

By Dexter R. Matilla
2bU! Correspondent

NOBODY thought they would go as far as the but Colegio San Agustin overcame the odds Immaculate Conception Academy, to c themselves the first Greenwich Volleyball Invitat Tournament champions at the Caruncho gym in Pasig.

The stage was all set for an ICA celebration as they up, 2-1, needing only one more set to seal the victory CSA put together a furious rally to win the set and fo rubber match for all the marbles. In the final set, both t came out of their respective huddles with guns blazing seemed poised to put CSA's efforts for naught as they up, 16-15.

"I thought it was the end," CSA coach Grace Vita said

But her players had other things in mind, answering every offensive with stifling defense. Its game was led b tournament's most valuable player, Ronagen Martin eventually pulled off the nerve-wracking 21-19 victory.

"(I feel) overwhelmed, elated and very proud o team," Vita, who was named best coach, said.

"People always remember winners... and I thank team, the girls and their parents because they came and their all-out support."

Vita said the win wasn't easy, as they had to face t teams including Miriam, Immaculate Conception-G hills, and Hope Christian. For Martinez, who was als tournament's best blocker, winning the MVP award "ca a big surprise."

"I'm very happy and it made my family and friends p of me," Martinez said.

The tournament was sponsored by Greenwich, Fru and the Philippine Daily Inquirer's 2bU!.

E-mail the author at dxmatilla@yahoo.com

2bU! PROMO

Win 'American Idol' goodies

LAST week, we said goodbye to four contestants. This week, we're waiting with baited breath to see who stays and who goes.

To add even more fun to this season's "American Ido 2bU! and Star World will be giving away exclusive "Am ican Idol" premium items starting this week.

E-mail your answers to the following questions to americanidol_on_starworld@yahoo.com. The first five people who will send correct answers will win.

1. Question:
From what show was American Idol adapted from?
2. Question:
Where was the venue of the first audition of Season
3. Question:
During the first round of the semifinal round this season, who were the contestants booted out of the show a ter receiving the lowest number of votes from viewers?
4. Question:
Who was the American Idol contestant who threw a cup of water at judge Simon Cowell, drenching him?
5. Question:
Among the changes in Season 4 of American Idol is a mandatory maximum age for all contestants-what is th maximum age limit?

Catch "American Idol" on Star World with direct off satellite telecasts on Wednesday and Thursday at 4 p.m and primetime replays at 8 p.m.

Winners for Week of Feb. 24:
1. Pedro Quetulio
2. Yas Refran
3. Cathy Avenido
4. Gregory Miranda
5. Carmina Reyes

Winners will be notified on how they can claim their prizes.

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VICTORY. Colegio San Agustin beat the odds

The championship came at the cost of Immaculate Conception Academy, which put up a spirited fight

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WHAT WOMEN WANT. Kate Torralba and Myrza Sison

GLOWIN LUXASIA ladies Vanessa Mayuga, Chris Yam, Celine Lopez and Preview's beauty basket Agoo Bengzon

VANITY UNFAIR. Embassy celebrant DJ Montano and (this is the first time in history they will be labeled as such) friends

HOTOS BY EDDIE BOY ES

Confessions of a club owner

Tim Yap

GUESS what, I have been staying home more often these days.

Of course, when I say home, I mean the "more-than-four-walls" of The Fort's bastion of nocturnal activity, Embassy.

Call it twist of fate, but now every time I walk through Embassy's glass walkway-slash-runway (work it!), I prepare myself to make sure everyone feels pampered. This is quite the opposite of my past existence as frequent flyer of other night spots. My respect for Louie Ysmael (who has been doing it since God-knows-when) has gone even higher.

It is quite obvious that Manila is having a nightlife resurgence. People are partying all night, and not with water bottles in tow. It seems the urbanite has broken out of his shell and is now willing to dish out the dough to make sure he enjoys every day (and night) to the fullest.

The yuppie mantra has shifted from "save it for a rainy day" to "shower yourself with as much blessings—I deserve it"—oh well, as we all know by now, life is too short. (Insert clinking of Moet & Chandon and Veuve Cliquot champagne flutes here.)

Observing the action from behind the Embassy velvet rope (okay, none yet—but soon there will be), I have witnessed what people can or will do just to get inside a packed club. Namedropping is a given. In this town, everyone thinks he deserves the VIP treatment (which, in a service-oriented industry, is expected—but just like the World Perks Mileage Club, you need to earn your points). Here, people are insulted when they have to pay for the cover charge.

Then again, it's really never a cover charge—it's a consumable drink coupon with a stamp. Outside Embassy, other progressive clubs like Halo, Government, Bed, V, and Club V ask for a cover charge which comes with a drink or two.

The bottom line is, if we want the club scene to survive, let's support it.

Think of it as your little contribution to the improvement of the club scene that you so absolutely love.

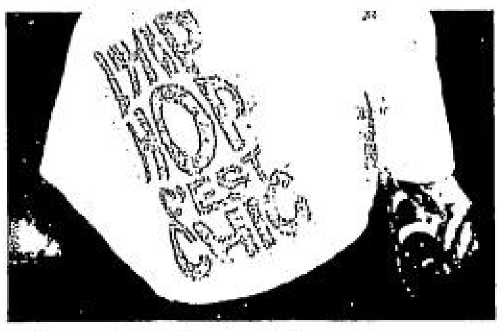
"What people do not realize is that they are occupying a prime piece of real estate—rent these days is not cheap," so said Ian Schrager, progenitor of hip hotels worldwide. "We didn't have to pay at the other places!"

Some would protest. (Maybe that's why those places closed.) Yes, precisely because where you went before was really a restaurant that turns itself into a bar that turns itself into a club.

Some "brave" (meaning, people who I have never met in my whole life—and that's actually very few) souls would even come up to me to ask if they could get in for free.

MOST ELIGIBLE. Ricky Delgado and Cessie Colayco

TO A brighter year ahead



EMBASSY HIP. Hop on Wednesdays

"How come I'm not part of the list?" some irate guest would complain. Oh well, just like the velvet ropes, the list is still a work in progress. "How come the bouncer doesn't know me?" a publicist-slash-promoter complained during the opening party.

Well, guess what? The bouncer didn't even recognize Juliana Palermo and Diana Zubiri when they lined up for the VIP room last Saturday. So unless you're Sharon Cuneta, don't expect the doorman to know who you are.

Either that or just text me or any of my partners, Erik Cua, Jon Herrera and my favorite chef, Fernando Aracama. Or simply call ahead to be put on the list.

DJ's birthday

Speaking of lists, my favorite multilingual buddy, DJ Montano, made sure he had a good set of A-listers in white for his Moet mad and Veuve vogue birthday party last week, as seen on this page.

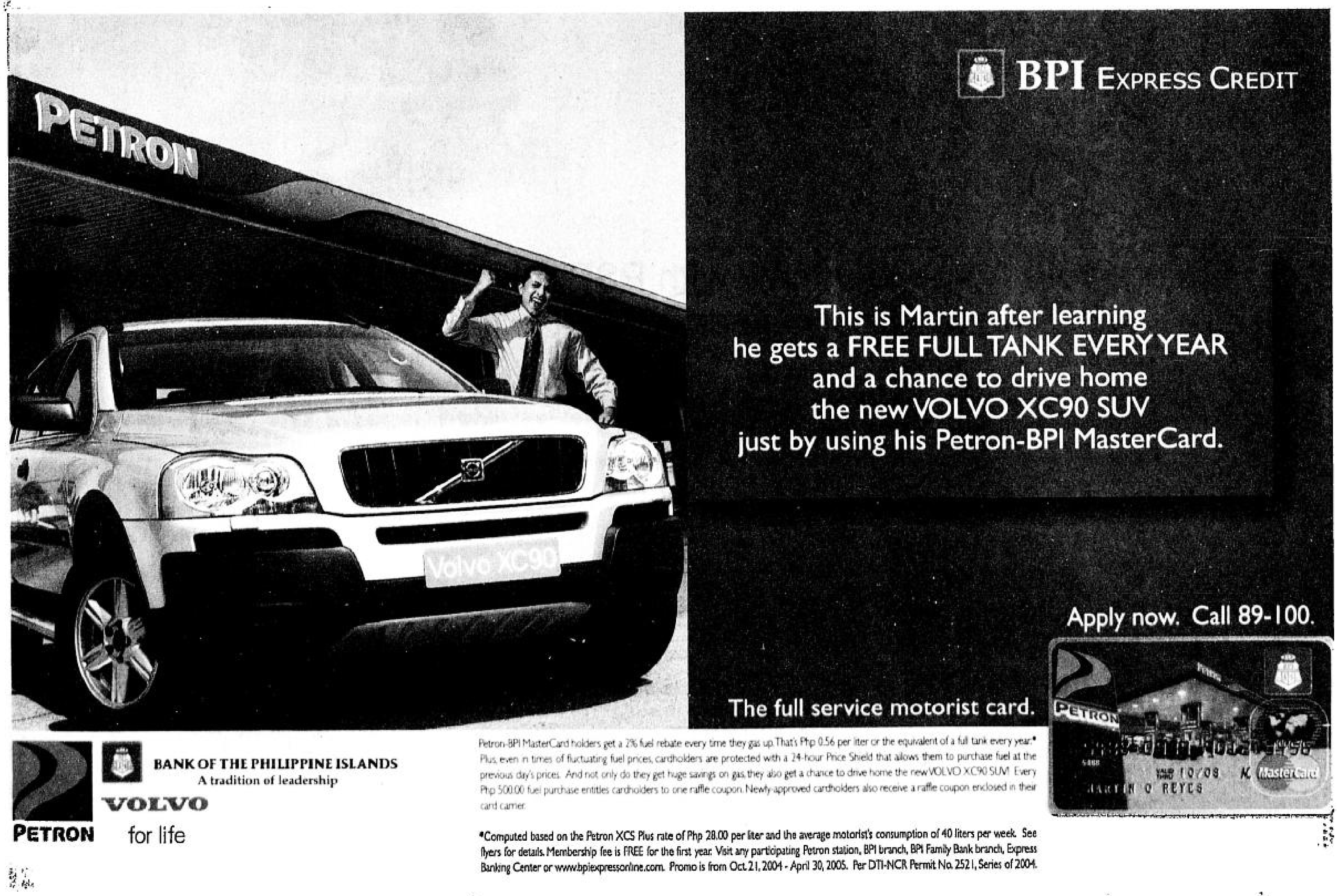
White was the color from dinner to after-party, while white ice (diamonds, Delilah dahlings—if I may borrow from Celine Lopez and Maurice Arcache) was for the ladies.

Aprés dinner (as DJ would put it), the light-hearted guests proceeded to the VIP room which his best buddy, Migs Rosales, splattered with sequins and white roses and candles. Mirror balls and white balloons completed the white fantasy that DJ wished for himself on his natal day.

DJ Jon Herrera's house music interspersed with funky retro made the partyphiles thump their dancing shoes till the wee (weeeee!!!) hours.

I guess I'll continue to stay home—my guests need their G.R.O.

SALIVATE. Cindy Kurleto sizzles for summer



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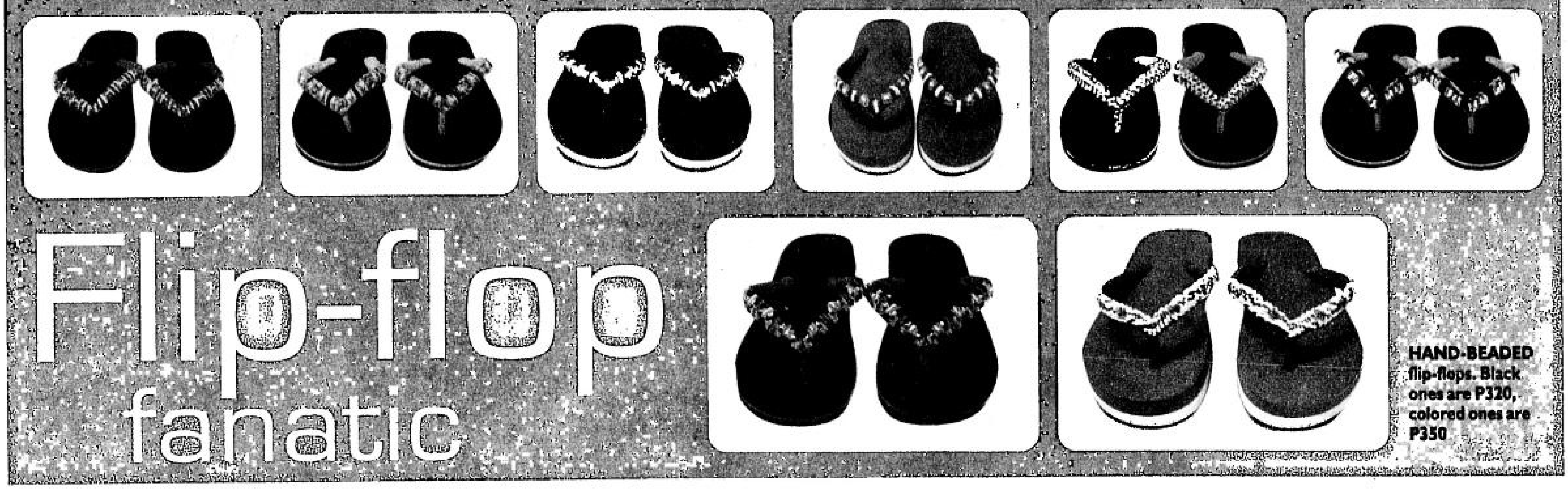
Flip-flop fanatic


HAND-BEADED flip-flops. Black ones are P320, colored ones are P350

Rain hand-beads the good old 'tsinelas' and turns them into irresistible fashion pieces

Text by Pam Pastor
Photos by Rudy Esperas

THE INTENSE heat is torturing us all but the arrival of summer gives us one thing to be happy about.

It's flip-flop season once again.

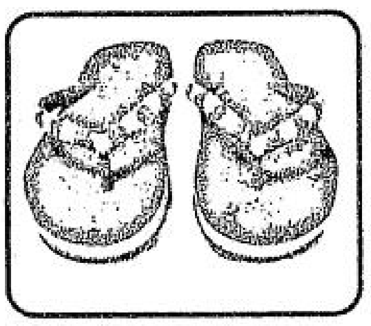
Although a lot of people wear flip-flops year-round, summer is the perfect time to whip them out and show off that great pedicure.

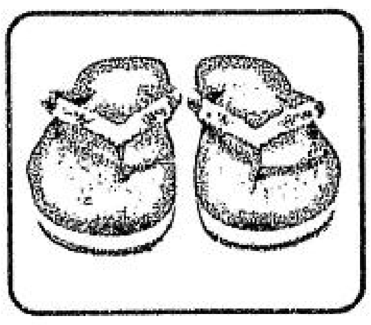
Twenty-three-year-old Ann Lorraine Lu decided to capitalize on this fact.

Rain was working in a hotel when she decided to quit and become a full-time graduate school student. "Finding myself with no income and resources slowly depleting, I began thinking of what business I could possibly venture into."

"I noticed how the Brazilian-made branded flip-flops are becoming fashion must-have nowadays. But it's not something everyone could afford. That's when I came up with the idea to turn the ordinary *tsinelas* into a funky and trendy fashion piece that is affordable at the same time."

Last January, she started her project.





"I started making hand-beaded flip-flops. I actually got the inspiration from [2bU!] since I read the article with the girl who makes pearl necklaces and paints on them."

With the help of her fiancé and yes, her *yaya*, Rain took a head-first plunge into the business. Her first clients were her relatives, friends and classmates. Then, friends of her clients started ordering, too. "I have people who buy three to five pairs at a time. They either buy it for themselves or give them away as gifts. My customers vary from teenagers to middle-aged women. It is really something for everyone."

She makes new bead designs every week, but Rain's best sellers remain to be her pink, blue, lime-green and purple flip-flops with white trim.

And while she's happy about selling, she said the cash inflow is just a perk. "The income I get from this business is just a bonus, but what really drives me is being able to express myself creatively, and having others be interested and appreciative of my work is the best feeling."

People will undoubtedly ask the all-important question—just how comfy are Rain's Beadsteps?

Very. So comfy that men might even be wearing them soon.

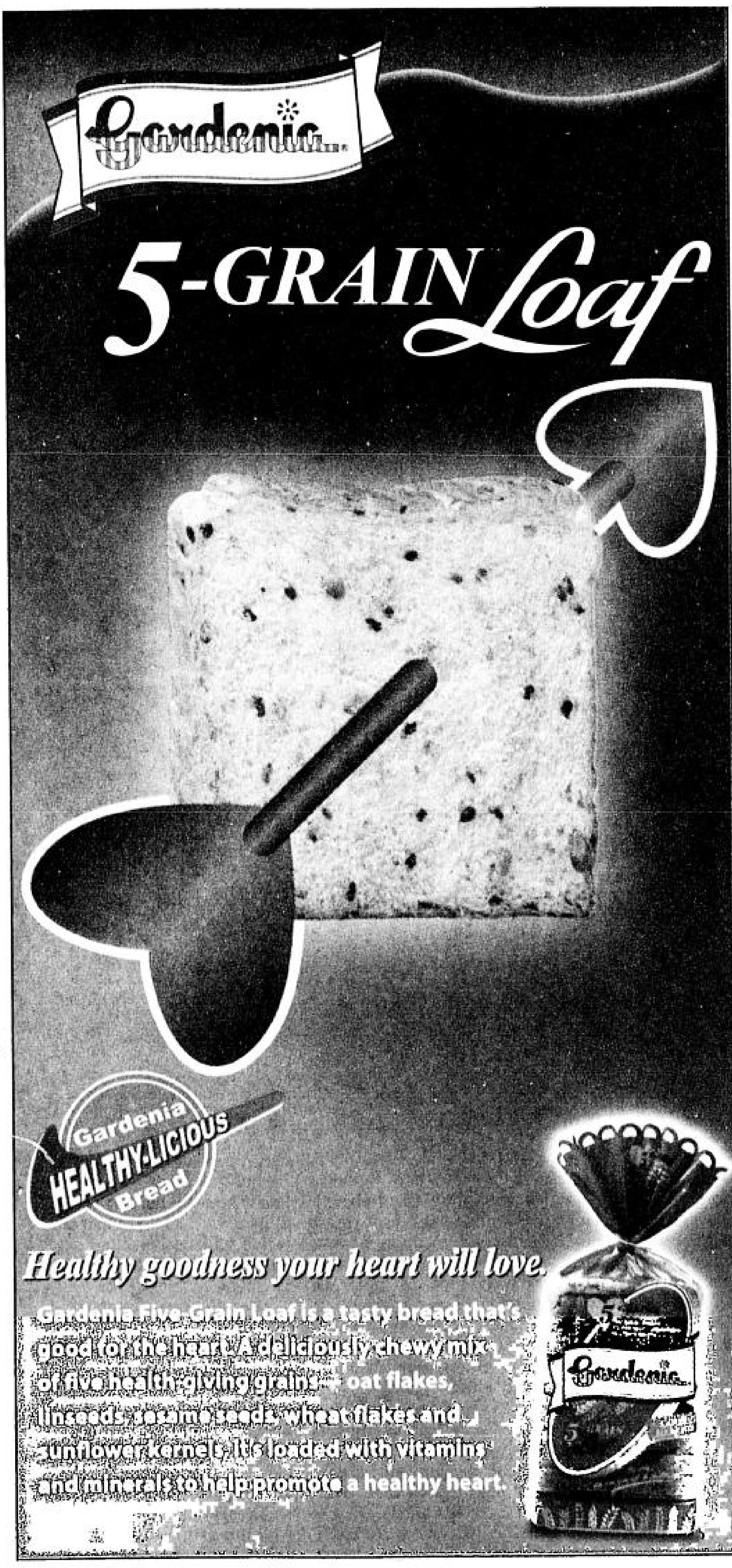
"I have been getting requests to design and make beaded flip-flops for men," Rain said. "I would probably look into it soon."

The lure of Beadsteps is undeniable. When the loot arrived at the 2bU! office for a shoot, the girls went crazy, trying them on and declaring which ones they were purchasing.

"I wanted to create something that is inexpensive, unique and different so that people could not resist getting a pair."

Rain has definitely succeeded.

To get the link to Rain's online photo album, e-mail her at beadsteps@yahoo.com. Call or text her at 0917-8989953.



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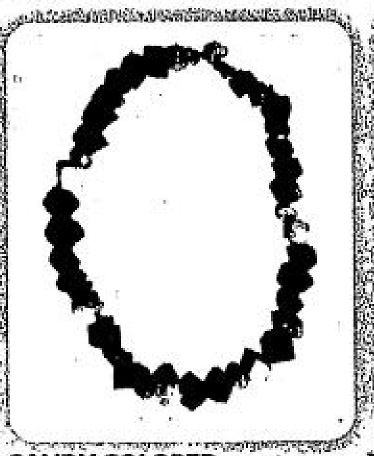
AQUA and green bead necklace


CANDY-COLORED quartz necklace

YELLOW and gold bead earrings

SWAROVSKI crystal necklace with butterfly quartz pendant

Awesome accessories

Text and photos by Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent

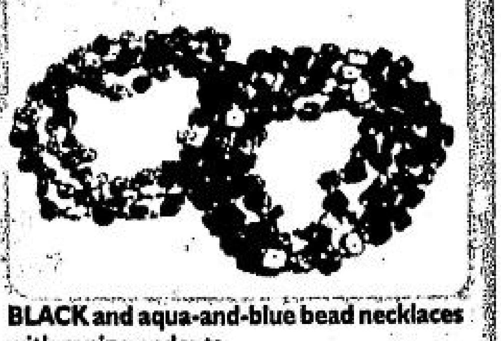
KRIS Aquino and Korina Sanchez got Marianne Jose on her feet.

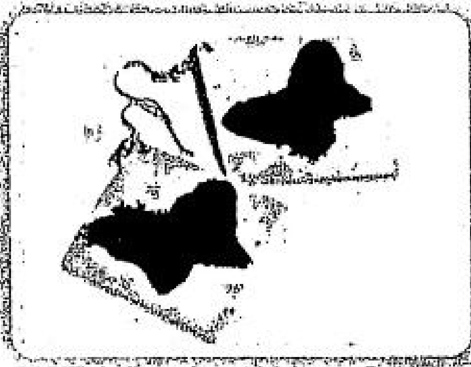
"Back in college, I would watch TV and see all the *artistas*, especially Kris Aquino and Korina Sanchez, wearing bead accessories," Marianne says. "I thought, I could make those just like what the *artistas* wore, and *mas mura pa* if I'll make it myself. I went to Quiapo, bought three strands of rose quartz and made it into a necklace. That was my very first creation."

From there, she started making various accessories, including earrings and bracelets, and is also venturing into sandals this summer. "Since I make only 2 pieces for each design, there is almost no chance of you seeing another person with the same thing," she says. "Also, I keep my stuff affordable. Nothing is over P500—I want to let everyone be able to buy my accessories."

Contact Marianne at 0916-6069068.

MULTI-STRANDED fuschia bead necklace


BLACK and aqua-and-blue bead necklaces with capiz pendants

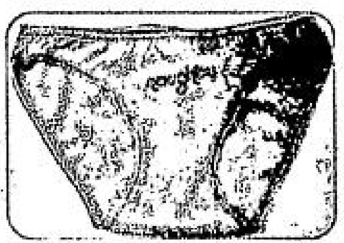

CAPIZ shell earrings with butterfly embellishment

BLUE quartz earrings

GIFT package for all occasion

Amanda's secret

Text by Katrina Yap
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Rudy Esperas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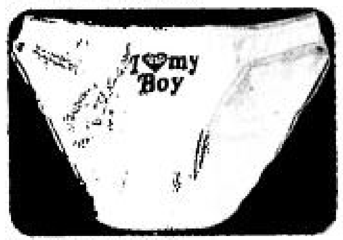


STATING a fact

A group of graduating students' naughty project becomes a promising business

AMANDA Nograles, a graduating Management Economics (ME) major, wanted to get an A in her business formulation and implementation class last year.

She needed to come up with a project that would make money… and earn the respect of her teachers. With her groupmates Mich Señir, Nio Judalena, Char Tan, Em Millan, Merik Abella and Robbie Paraan, Nograles came up with Naughty Undie.

Nograles says she was first apprehensive about the idea of selling panties because most members of her group were men. She also felt embarrassed to sell her merchandise.

"And it seemed so menial. *Nag-ME-ko pa ako* to sell panties. But eventually, I grew to love the concept and committed myself to it," she says.

Unimpressed

Selling the idea to professors, however, was not easy. The first time they had to defend their project they faced one criticism after another. The panelists were not particularly impressed, and they got a C+.

"We were humiliated and scolded. (We heard) remarks like, 'I'm not even going to let my 15-year-old wear that'," Nograles recalls.

But this letdown only made her and her friends more determined. They knew there was a market for the underwear - the young, trendy, *kikay* Filipino girl who values self-expression. They stood their ground, and worked extra hard to push their items during the business implementation phase of the project.

The group joined bazaars, asked friends to market their products, and did direct selling. Nograles even brought her items to the gym and sold her stuff in the women's locker room. Her customers loved the items.

They also picked the right time to launch their business. It was the Christmas season, so many people bought them as gifts.

Just one of many

It wasn't easy though. Being full-time college seniors, the project was just one of many that needed to be done. "We were on hell week mode for the rest of the semester. And inconsistent suppliers and unkept promises certainly (did not) help our situation," Nograles says.

Looking for suppliers was the biggest obstacle they faced. According to Nograles, mainstream suppliers would not accept their terms. The suppliers' minimum order ranged from 5,000 to 6,000 pieces but the group only had budget for 500 to 1,000 pieces.

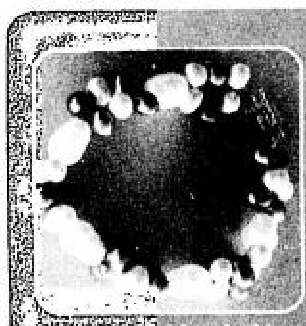
But the group persevered and eventually found a supplier that could meet their requirements.

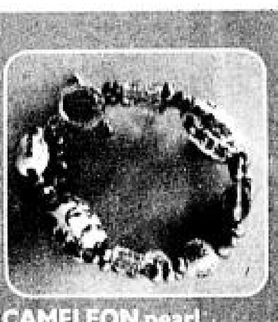
Hard work paid off. "We sold enough and, because of the business experience garnered over the three-month implementation phase, we were able to write an in-depth paper on our strategy," Nograles says. The group received good marks from the panel, which made up for all the hardships.

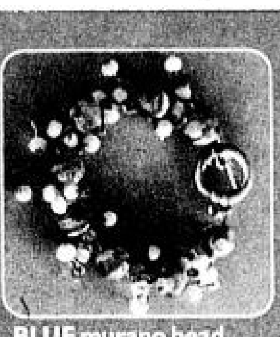
But while the school project was over, the business was not as consumer demand continued. And since Nograles and friends were still awaiting replies to their job and law school applications, they thought it best to continue the business. Besides, with classes almost over, they had more time to attend to the business.

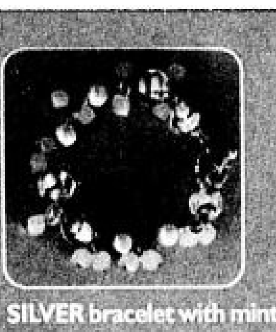
At present, the group is still waiting for their final grade. Whether or not they get the A they were aiming for, the success of Naughty Undie seems proof enough they have indeed learned entrepreneurial instincts and business skills.

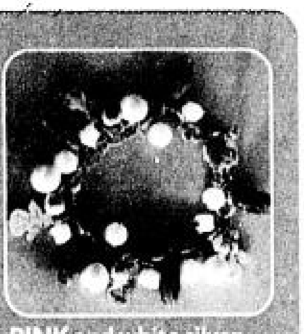
Contact Nograles at amanda1@pldtdsl.net and at 0917-8159492.

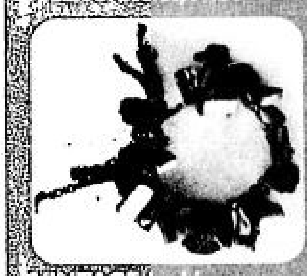

YELLOW gold and white pearl bracelet, P450

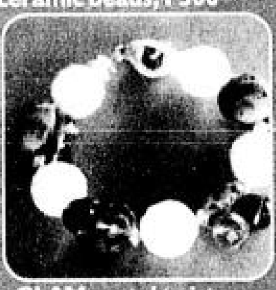

CAMELEON pearl bracelet with Chinese ceramic beads, P300

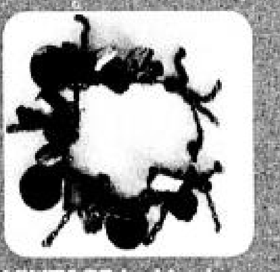

BLUE murano bead bracelet, P250


SILVER bracelet with mint green cubes, blue pearls and glass beads, P300


PINK and white silver chain bracelet, P400


VINTAGE-looking bronze bracelet, P400


GLAM pastel twist bracelet, P500


VINTAGE-looking bronze bracelet, P400

PAINTED ceramic bracelet, P250

VINTAGE bronze necklace, P150

Power of two

Twenty-four-year-old Olive and Kaye set aside their difference and unite in their mission - to help Filipinas feel good about themselves

Text by Pam Pastor
Photos by Romy Homillada

THEY'RE very different. Twenty-four-year-old Olive Estrella is a cum laude graduate from UP Diliman with a bachelor's degree in Broadcast Communication. She's been an editor, writer, events coordinator, membership officer and pre-school teacher.

Kaye Garcia-Lim, also 24, graduated from UST with a bachelor's degree in Med Tech. She worked in Pfizer as an administrative officer and researcher and now she's a full-time wife and mommy.

But they do have some things in common—their love for style and fashion.

Back in 2002, they used to sell accessories through their families, friends and acquaintances. They also joined bazaars and penetrated through different organizations. But when business became slow, they decided to put a stop to it.

But when Kaye married Olive's cousin and moved into their house, the two decided to breathe new life into their old business. "It was really a convenient and good time for us because she was technically a housewife and I was presently unemployed, and accessories were getting popular again."

Thus the birth of Be.My.Beads by Olive and Kaye. Their accessories are divided into four categories— Glam and Glitzy, Cool and Casual, Fun and Funky and Chic and Charming, to cater to the various needs of various women.

Kaye and Olive are constantly seeking growth. "We constantly study our craft by researching the accessories market—design, price, materials, marketability, etc., as well as teaching ourselves through beading books and magazines, and through our own experimentation."

The girls are driven by their desire to help Filipinas feel good about themselves.

"Filipinas like us express themselves through beauty, creativity and imagination. Looking good is not just about physical appearance, but more importantly about feeling good as well, boosting one's self-esteem and confidence and having the courage to face up to life's challenges as well as enjoy its blessings."

They design and create their products on their own, with their own hands. Olive is passionate about experimenting with colorful beads and likes inventing unique earrings. Kaye, on the other hand, loves pearls and crystals, using them for handcrafted bracelets.

Their bestsellers include the chandelier earrings, charm bracelets and vintage-looking designs.

Right now, Olive and Kaye have been selling their products through their families, friends and the Internet. Soon they will be part of the Filipino Cybermall.com which will be launched this month. They are also looking into consignment deals.

The two have a lot of plans for the future. "Naturally, like other young designers, we would like to have our very own shop someday. For our more immediate goals, we plan to venture into other bead products such as beaded hair accessories, bags, belts, bra straps, tops and jeans. We would also like to eventually have our own website and be able to export our products."

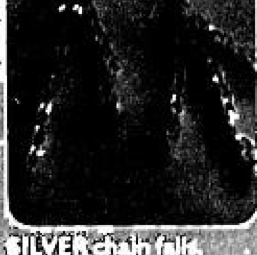
The future looks bright for Olive and Kaye. And why shouldn't it be? After all, two heads are better than one.

Check out their products at www.picturetrail.com/be_my_beads. For orders and inquiries, call 0917-2090078 and 0922-8118722 or e-mail be_my_beads@yahoo.com.

LEAF drop earrings, P150

WHITE sand pearl necklace with pink pearls, P300

BLACK crystal and murano bead earrings, P180


SILVER chain falls, P100

SILVER flower earrings with red chips and peach beads, P150

WHITE sand pearl earrings with pink pearls, P150

WHITE grape design earrings, P150

CHINESE ceramic earrings, P150

RED grape design earrings, P200

PURPLE chandelier earrings with charcoal chains, P180

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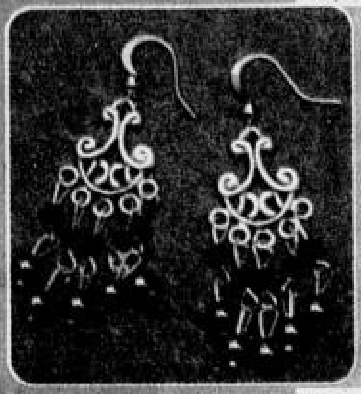
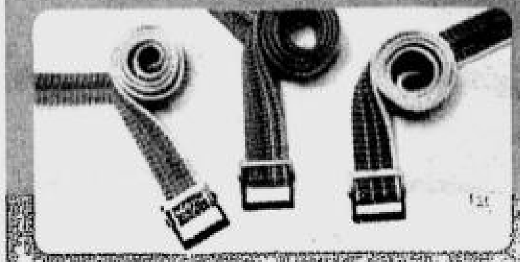
ORANGE + lime vines, P100

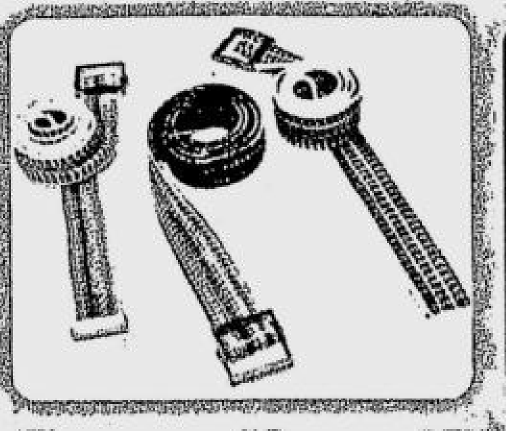


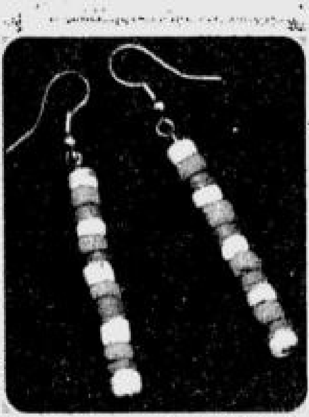
BLACK beauty, P120

EARRINGS for different outfits and different moods



COLORFUL belts, P80



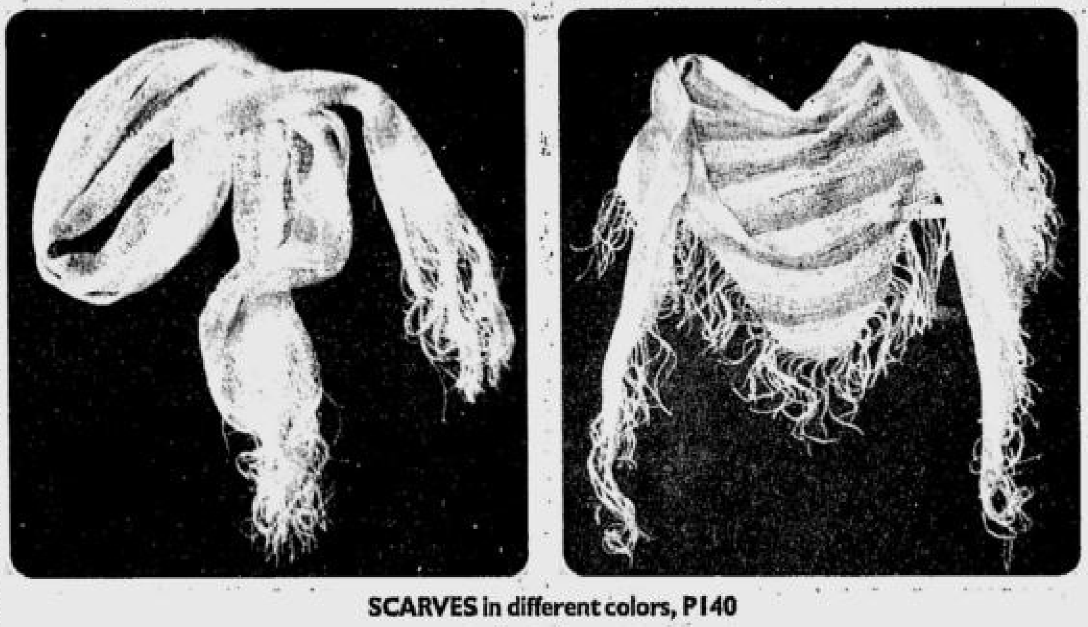


CUTIE long, P50

COLOR you want, P80

PINK light, P100. Also in yellow, blue, green and violet

'Kikay' and proud of it



SCARVES in different colors, P140

Text by Maui V. Reyes
2bu! Correspondent
Photos by Raffy Lerma

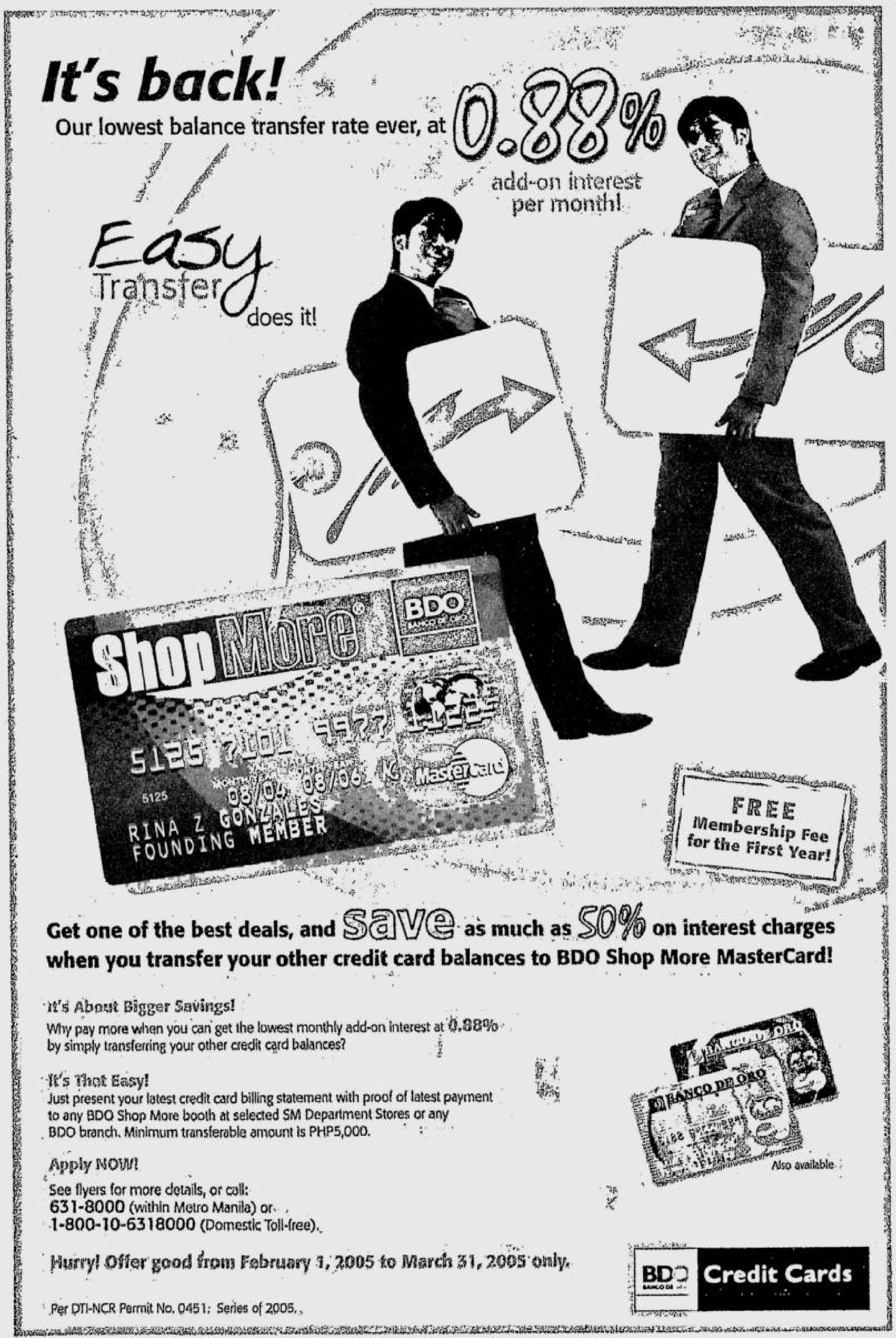
EVER found yourself lusting over items that you just can't afford? While some choose to save up for them, Bianca Abad decided to actually make them.

Tired of asking her mother for more pocket money to go shopping, Bianca enlisted the aid of her aunt who was familiar with the ropes of accessory making.

From wallets to bracelets to bags and brooches, Bianca launched her own online catalog (check it out at http://princessbratinella.multiply.com/market) where she sells her own handmade items or resells fab finds.

Inspired by "other young entrepreneurs who really started from scratch, from their own *kakikayan*, too, and eventually started making money from it," Bianca dreams of going to Hong Kong's famed night market one day, to hunt for even more "irresistible *kikay* products."

To get a hold of Bianca's products, check out her website, or e-mail babynomore_26@yahoo.com. She can also be reached at 09224730229.



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Lighting up imagination

By Maui V. Reyes
2bu! Correspondent

I LOVE Christmas lights, but not during the Christmas season," Jhoanna Cruz shares. "Candles are passé, and Boracay lamps are tacky." Her solution? Hiraya lamps! Made of cloth for Christmas lights to string through, a Hiraya lamp easily adds pizzazz to any home.

Cruz confesses that before making her first lamp, she didn't know how to operate a sewing machine. "But seeing the finished product gave me a tangible sense of accomplishment that my two masters degrees didn't. Each time I sold one, I felt appreciated in a way that my writing never made me feel!" she says.

Hiraya, which means "imagination" in Tagalog, is Cruz's inspiration. It's also the name of her one-year-old son, whose education plan she's saving up for.

Hiraya lamps are P75 each. They also make gorgeous incense holders (P50), and beautiful rain sticks (size varies, the cheapest is P300). To order, text or call 0922-8016689 or e-mail hirayalamps@yahoo.com. Some of their items are also carried by Tribeau, located at the corner of Lerma and Morayta in Manila.

MOTORING
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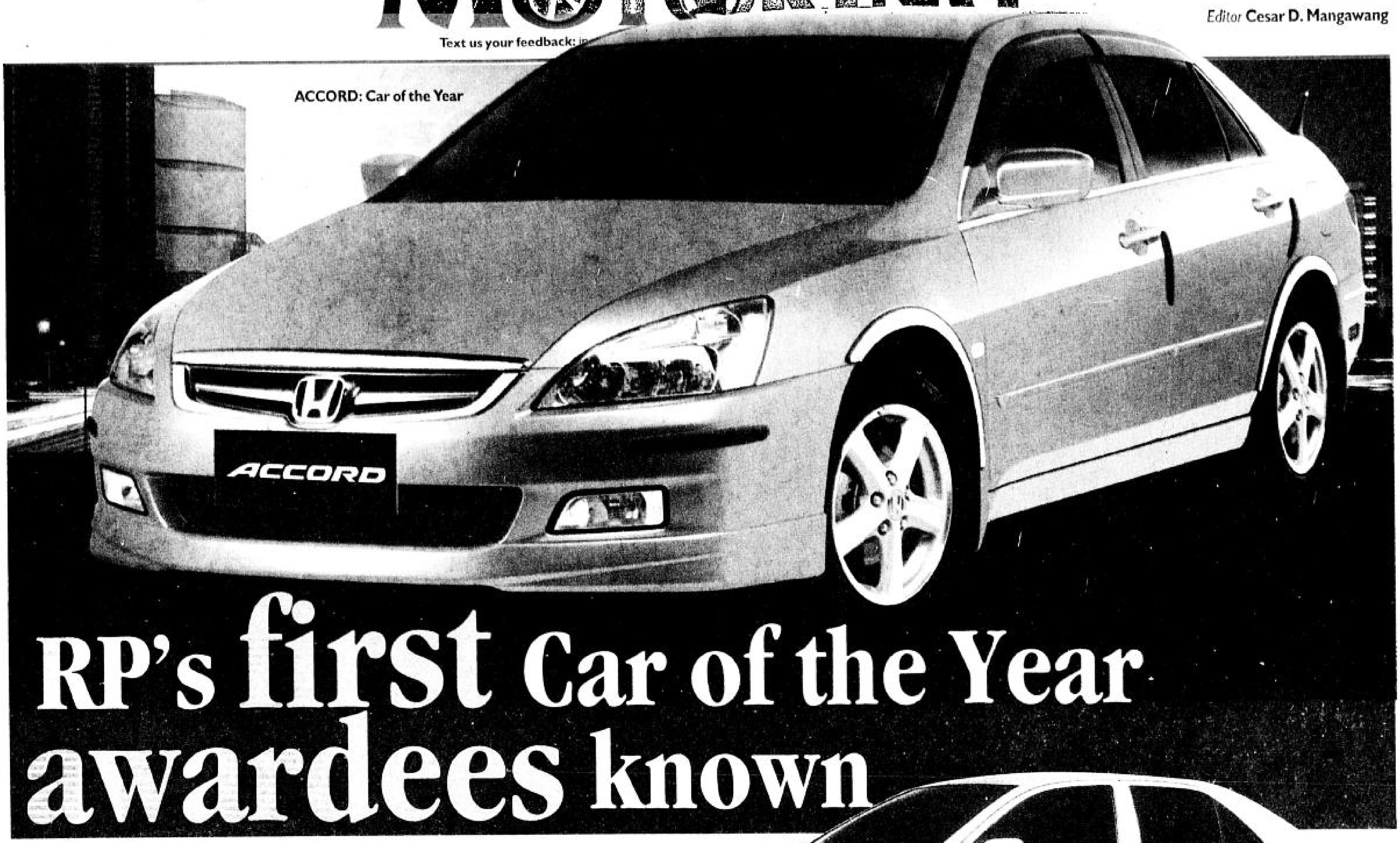

ACCORD: Car of the Year

RP's first Car of the Year awardees known

By Charles E. Buban

A PANEL of judges made up of more than 40 motoring media personalities has reached its verdict: the inaugural title of "Philippine Car of the Year" has been awarded to the 3-liter V6 Honda Accord.

The mid-sized executive sedan bested nine other rivals which are themselves winners in their respective categories.

After weeks of extensive evaluation and performance testing, the panel found the Accord to possess excellent handling and ride characteristics, excellent brand image and powerful engine.

The awarding was held last Thursday at the Rockwell Tent at the Plaza in Makati City.

It also exhibited the best value among the car models of 2004, the panel said.

How it wowed the media

"This car wowed the media evaluators with its outstanding acceleration, balanced ride and handling characteristics and executive rocket demeanor from its powerful V6 engine," said Armin Amio, president of Car Awards Group Inc. (Cagi), the organization behind the Philippine Coty Awards.

Incidentally, the seventh generation Accord was also chosen 2004's Best Executive Sedan for showing the best attributes of an L-class sedan (a Chamber of Automobile Manufacturers of the Philippines classification which refers to mid-sized sedans powered by engines ranging from a 2-liter fours, 2.5-liter inline six cylinders up to 3-liter V6).

"We are extremely honored that the Accord was selected the Philippine Coty and also the 2004 Best Executive Sedan from among an equally deserving list of nominees," said Arnel Doria, Honda Cars Philippines marketing deputy head.

Major award winners

Apart from announcing the Philippine Coty, other major award winners were also announced last Thursday.

The Best Van/People Carrier of the Year went to Hyundai Starex CRDi for showing the best attributes of a van or mini van during the Test Fest weekends held from September to November last year at the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club in Cavite.

This vehicle bested its competitors with its tall airy cabin, ergonomics, market appeal and fastest acceleration among diesel-powered vans.

Best AUV

The Best Asian Utility Vehicle of the Year plum went to Mitsubishi Adventure Grand Sport for having the best characteristics—all-around utility, features, ride comfort and esthetic appeal—from among its competitors.

The Ford Ranger XLT was chosen the Best Pickup of the Year for its tough truck image, soft ride, spacious interior, excellent build quality and strong power train.

The panel revealed it accelerated almost as fast as a sport compact car during the Test Fest while retaining the utility of a truck.

'Super Mini'

The term "Super Mini" was coined to refer to the locally available cars with engine displacements of 1 liter up to 1.5 liter (which the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc. classifies as under "SS class" category) and with body configurations that vary from four-door sedans to five-door hatchbacks.

From this category, the 1.3-liter Toyota Vios came out the Best Super Mini of the Year, thanks to its fast acceleration, best value and market appeal among its competitors.

The Ford Lynx RS 2.0 came out as the Best Sports Compact of the Year for besting its compact sedan competitors during the Test Fest with adrenalin-rushing acceleration, raw power and boy racer looks.

The panel also noted that the test vehicle used during the Test Fest exhibited outstanding performance despite its high mileage and tough life as a media test unit, which attest to its durability and build quality.

SUV galore

One of the more exciting phase of the Test Fest was when 17 sport utility vehicles were brought in to the Eagle Ridge and Country Club for evaluation.

For displaying the acceleration of a car, the utility of an SUV and the riding comfort of a luxury sedan, the Nissan X-Trail 250X was voted Best SUV Lite of the Year.

The panel added that the X-Trail certainly added zest to the brand's image and captured a huge portion of the Light SUV market share.

The Best Luxury SUV of the Year went to the Chevrolet Trailblazer EXT after it surprised the panel with its smooth operation, carlike civility and balanced package.

The six-cylinder mid-sized SUV proved attuned to the local driving conditions and the manner by which luxury SUVs are used in the country, the panel added.

Discriminating clientele

For displaying the best characteristics of a sporty luxury sedan, with performance and safety features that will satisfy even the most discriminating clientele, the Best Luxury Sedan of the Year title went to the Volvo S60 T5.

The panel revealed that the T5 competed closely with another European luxury sedan and eventually edged its competitor when the price was factored in.

As for the Best Ultra Luxury Sedan of the Year title, the BMW 745Li emerged as the clear choice after it successfully convinced its evaluators with its scorching acceleration time of 6.8 seconds to 100 kilometers per hour, ultra luxurious interior, highly technical features and heart stopping price—definitely, a representation of the best luxury ride available in the country today.

X-factor

The Media Choice Award is an interesting category that Cagi included simply because the winner must appeal to the members of the panel without reference to category, size, displacement, price or vehicle configuration, in other words, it must have that X-factor.

Citing exterior styling, interior ergonomics and the general characteristics, it was the Mazda3 that came out the Media Choice awardee.

5 special awards

Several members of Cagi who attended the pre-Awards event (sponsored by the Manila Motor Show) at the Blue Shade of the Rockwell Club last Jan. 19 came out with five special awards.

The special awards, based on personal preferences of the attending Cagi members, went to Volvo XC90 for being Best in Safety Package; Mazda3 for having the Best Overall Design; BMW 745Li's I-drive as Best in Technical Innovation; the Kia Picanto LX for possessing the Best Value for Money; Isuzu Philippines Corp. for having the Best Marketing Campaign (for their Isuzu Crosswind XUVi product).

A Special Participation Award was given to Cats Motors Inc. for sending its Mercedes-Benz SLK 350 to the last weekend of the Test Fest (Nov. 27 and Nov. 28).

56 vehicles tested

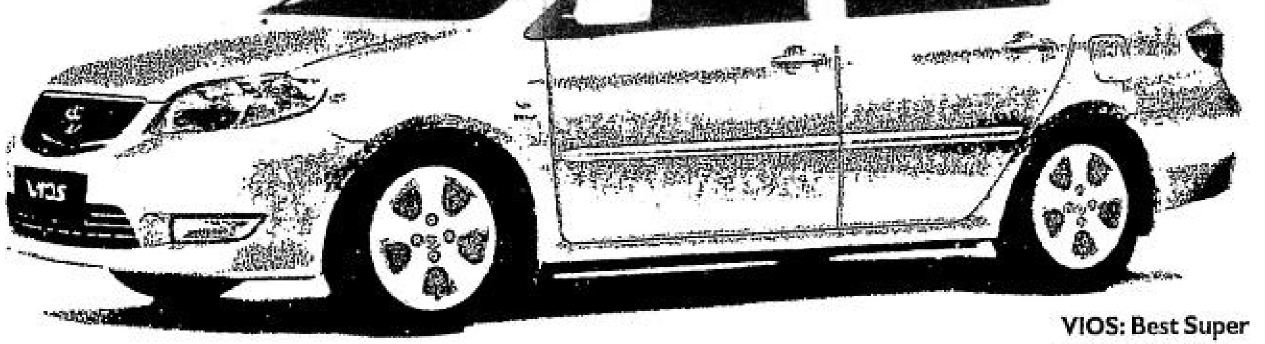
A total of 56 vehicle units were tested during the Test Fest.

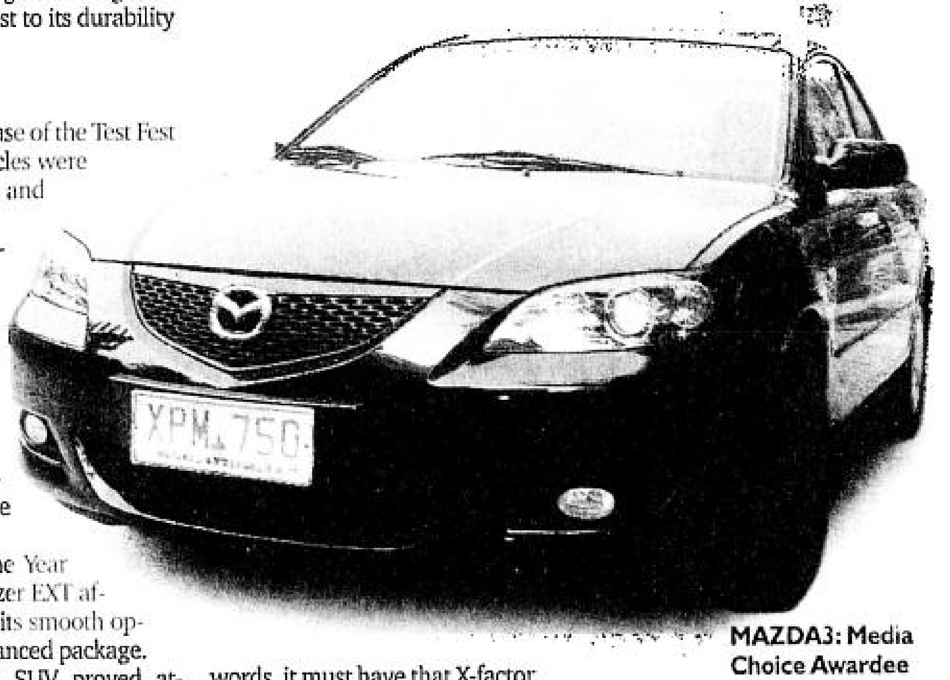
Results from the instrumented and subjective evaluations were transmitted to SGV and Co., the Philippine Coty Awards official auditor, which inputted the price factor to the final results.

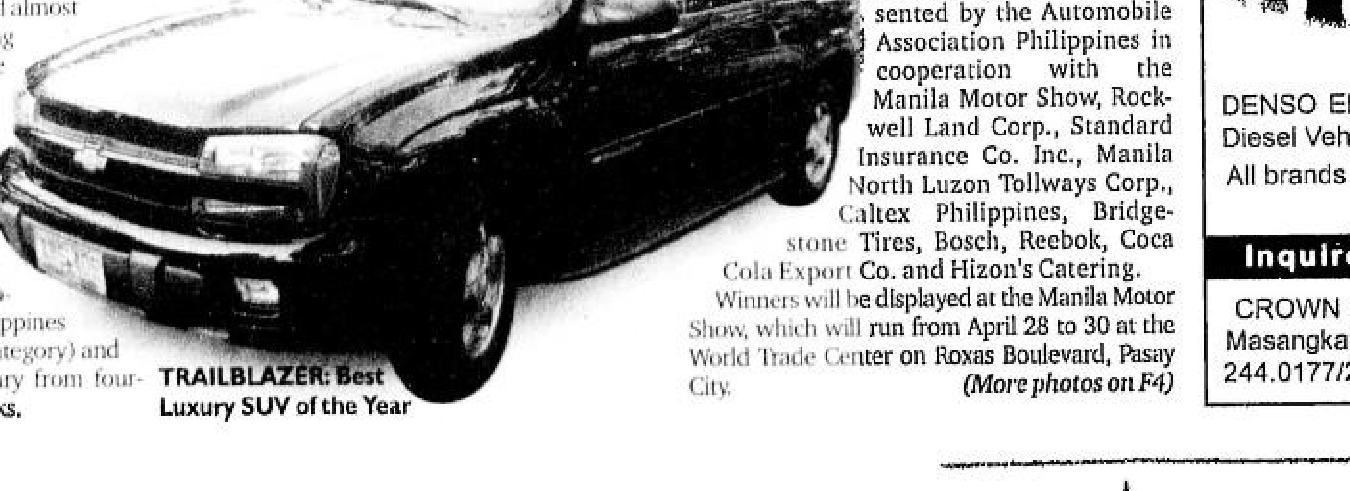
The Philippine Coty Awards night was also presented by the Automobile Association Philippines in cooperation with the Manila Motor Show, Rockwell Land Corp., Standard Insurance Co. Inc., Manila North Luzon Tollways Corp., Caltex Philippines, Bridgestone Tires, Bosch, Reebok, Coca Cola Export Co. and Hizon's Catering.

Winners will be displayed at the Manila Motor Show, which will run from April 28 to 30 at the World Trade Center on Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City.

(More photos on F4)


VIOS: Best Super Mini of the Year


MAZDA3: Media Choice Awardee


TRAILBLAZER: Best Luxury SUV of the Year

Honda Accord exhibited the best value among the car models of 2004

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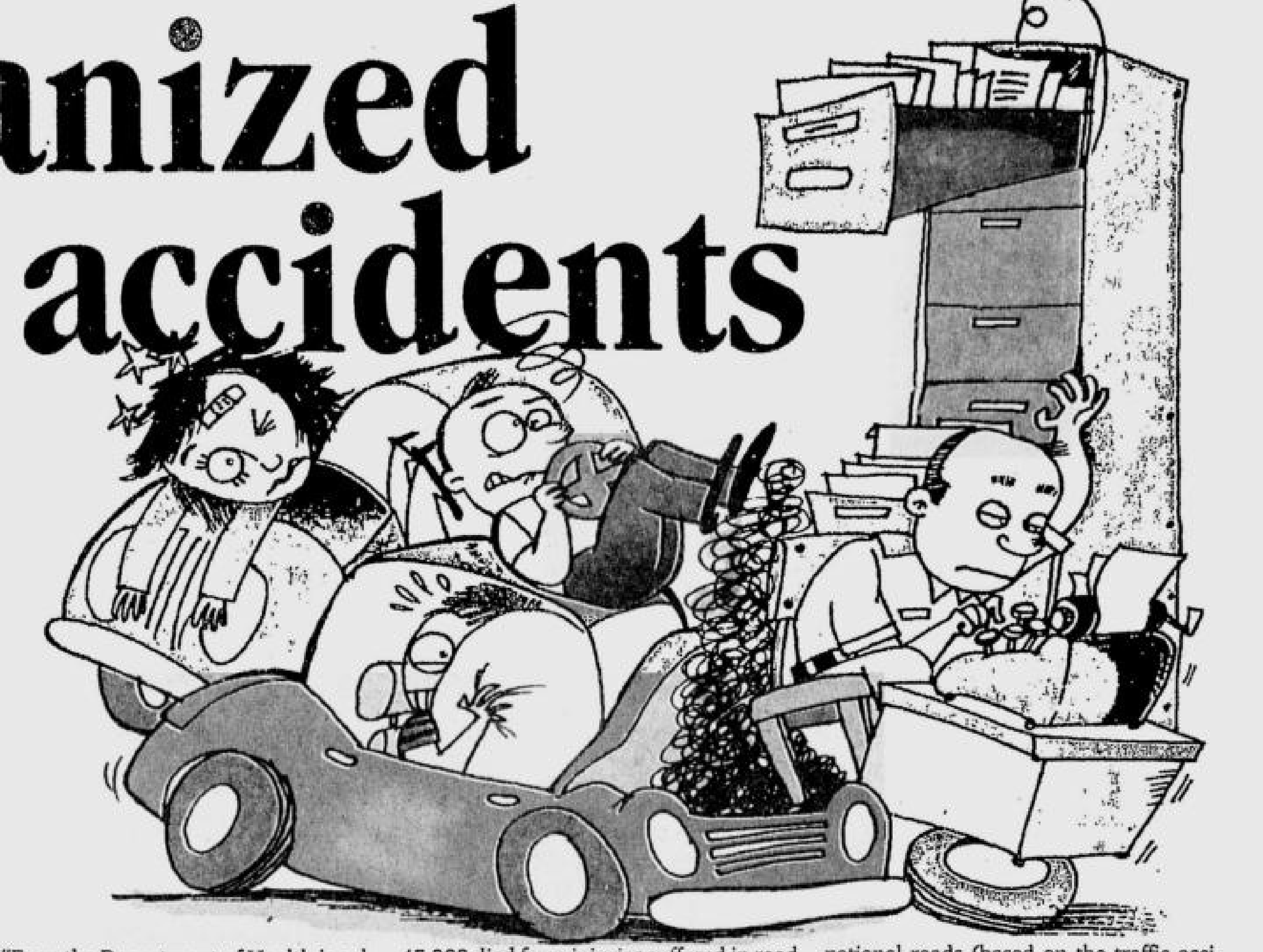
Getting organized after chaos of accidents



By Tessa R. Salazar

ROAD accident reports used to be typed by policemen on onion-skin papers or written on cigarette paper foils and left to rot in a filing cabinet somewhere until the next municipal fire consumes the building.

There was never a centralized and organized data base system, no methodical reporting system and no government agency in charge. The Philippine National Police, for instance, has its own statistics and so does the Department of Health gathered from the different hospitals. Both don't tally.

Accident data

Today, there is a more decisive step toward a more scientific treatment of policy on road safety, and it is now being enforced.

The accident data gathering is called Traffic Accident Recording and Analysis System or Taras. It is a foreign-funded project under the Department of Public Works and Highways.

Taras is a standardized form being filled up by policemen for the accident data collection to be inserted in a networked computer system. Policemen who are allowed to fill up the form should have attended the seminars already.

"Data gatherers are now getting the percentages and they are now getting more details," said Daisy Jacobo, safety education chief for the Land Transportation Office.

Jacobo is part of the technical working group of the National Road Safety Committee.

Cross checking

Said Jacobo: "We rely on police records that should be interfaced with the Department of Health records by way of cross checking data from hospitals and police statistics. If you cross reference the two, what will emerge is a more reliable empirical data on accidents, and there is a step toward that after Taras."

More than 40 percent of all motor vehicles in the Philippines are concentrated in Metro Manila.

Seventy-nine percent of Metro Manila residents make daily trips.

Approximately 98 percent of the travel demands are met by road transportation. The rest is accounted for by air and sea transport.

"Even the Department of Health is collating its own accident data derived from hospital records (accident victims derived from hospital data)," she said.

5th leading cause of death

In the Philippines, road accidents remain the fifth leading cause of death and also the fifth leading cause of injuries (in the five-year period from 1999 to 2004).

The Department of Health revealed that of the 432,000 fatalities in 2003, 45,000 died from injuries suffered in road accidents, although it admitted this figure may not be the approximate considering that road accident cases are underreported by as much as 90 percent for lack of a centralized system to gather these data.

Taras is patterned after the Crash Statistics of the Vic Roads Authority in the state of Victoria, Australia. It is deployed in 16 DPWH regional offices in the country. Networked computers are capable of data entry and monitoring of traffic accidents of national roads (based on the traffic accident report form from trained police).

Taras uses the database of the Locational Referencing System (LRS) where officers can pinpoint in proximity the actual road sections in the Philippines where the accident took place (national roads, in particular).

This serves as the Road and Bridge Inventory Administration's monitoring map so one can pinpoint the accident-prone areas in the country.

With P2-B investment, Mitsubishi going really big

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

IS it true that interest in the AUV (Asian utility vehicle) has waned so that some major car companies, like Mitsubishi, have started to redirect their focus somewhere?

I read a while back that Mel Dizon, the senior vice president of Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corp., said MMPC is bent on targeting huge projects on SUVs (sport utility vehicles). Already, Mitsubishi has rolled out the Montero, the baby SUV version of the all-time best-selling Pajero. Montero was unveiled recently together with Grandis, Mitsubishi's answer to Toyota's Previa.

Mel Dizon has expressed full confidence the twin blast will further solidify Mitsubishi's prestigious stature as the country's No. 2 top-selling assembler.

* * *

Oh, well, among topnotch Filipino executives in the motoring business, Mel Dizon is among the few who knows the business like the palm of his hand. His keen sense of economic ups and downs, fluctuating business concerns and forecasting trends is simply amazing. Even in the field of political alchemy, Mel can "cross words" with anyone, Dilangalen included. His incisive thoughts on both the world and political landscape make many of our so-called poll pundits mere minor leaguers. Always, I am on my toes each time our paths cross—usually they happen during Christmastime. I value those hours, Mel.

Even before 2005 could fully take off, Mitsubishi has already infused a whopping P2-billion investment intended wholly to SUV production. In the works is the massive manufacture and export of an 8-seater family and utility SUV from Mitsubishi's Cainta plant beginning 2007.

"Our plant realignments are on schedule," said Mel. "This March, 90 percent of our partners are ready for production in the last quarter of 2006."

The initial plan is to produce 3,000 units a month, two-thirds of which are for export initially to the Asean region. Units of the model's prototype are now being test-driven in Japan.

Although Mel is not talking—n'yet, anyways—the still-to-be-named SUV is said to resemble closely the Pajero and will be pitted against Toyota's recently launched Innova.

This early, the motoring world is already dying to see the new Mitsubishi model that will surely send sparks to the competition.

Why the waning interest in the AUV?

"The new excise tax is the culprit," said Mel Dizon, referring to the tax scheme deleting the tax exemption on 10-seater AUVs. "It killed the advantage of selling an AUV. Likewise, the AUV has devolved."

Very apt explanation, indeed. That's why Toyota has expunged the Revo in favor of Innova, whom Danny Isla calls an MPV (multipurpose vehicle).

* * *

While at it, I take this opportunity to raise a glass to Mitsubishi for topping the commercial vehicles category in sales for January. It sold 843 units. This is on top of defending Mitsubishi's solid No. 2 ranking in overall sales.

Based on combined reports provided by the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc. (Campi) and Truck Manufacturers Association (TMA), Mitsubishi cornered 22.1 percent market share of the total commercial vehicle category, beating Toyota's 770 units or 20.2 percent in the same month.

It was that close between the country's 1-2 punch in the motoring industry.

Said Froilan Dytianquin, Mitsubishi assistant vice president for marketing services: "Though January sales turned out to be low due to seasonality, we foresee market demand to improve in the coming months given the upbeat business climate due to the peso rally against the dollar, and of course the expected introduction of new models."

Mitsubishi sold 1,010 units overall (15.7 percent market share) to stay second behind Toyota, which sold 2,046 (31.7 percent). Isuzu was third with 780 (12.1 percent).

* * *

One thing good with the new, expanded Northern Luzon Expressway (NLEX) is that motorists will soon discover to their pleasant surprise that they will consume less fuel, brake fluid, and incur far less tire wear. Reason? Because the world-class condition of NLEX will enhance performance of the vehicle on a consistent basis. Minus potholes, bumps and scars that normally dot our highways, the lifespan of our vehicles will tremendously increase.

So, do I still see whiners?

As I keep saying here long before the plan to rehabilitate NLEX was even in the drawing boards, quality is always expensive.

You wanna eat peanuts, you only need coins.

You wanna eat chestnuts, you need bills.

The NLE, with the combined logistical advantages of Clark and Subic, will surely jumpstart investments and expansions in business and industry that has long evaded Central and Northern Luzon. Imagine the job opportunities lurking in the horizons in those regions.

* * *

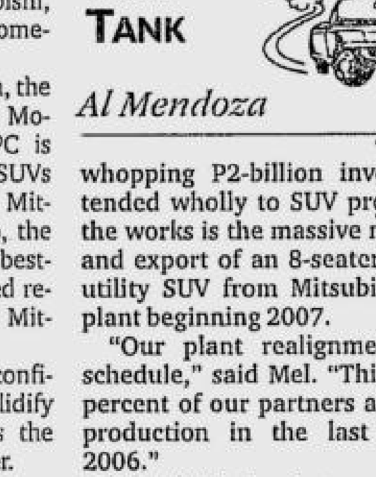
QUOTE ME. With summer just around the corner, better start checking your car aircon. It pays to be ready.

MONTERO SPORT

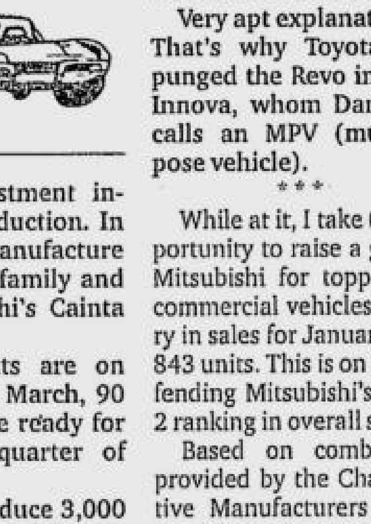
MONTERO

Shiga named Nissan chief operating officer

Ghosn sets to head Renault



SHIGA



GHOSN

NISSAN Motor Co. Ltd. (NML) of Japan recently announced the appointment of Toshiyuki Shiga as the company's chief operating officer (COO), who will assume his new position effective April 1. There will also be changes in NML's executive committee and board of directors. Shiga is formerly SVP in charge of general overseas market (sales and marketing division).

As COO, Shiga will be reporting to NML president and CEO Carlos Ghosn. The COO will support the president and CEO in all areas of the business and will have specific responsibility for global sales and marketing, human resources, treasury and quality.

RP visitor

It can be recalled that Shiga visited the Philippines last December to congratulate Nissan Motor Philippines Inc. (NMPI) president and CEO Leman Lee and the rest of the NMPI family for making the X-Trail the best-selling compact SUV in the country.

As COO, Shiga will be reporting to Ghosn. He joined NML in 1976 where he rose to the position of manager for Asia and Oceania Operation Division in 1990.

Exec in Nissan, Renault

By the end of April, Ghosn will be appointed president and CEO of Renault. He will be the first executive in the automotive world to hold such positions in two car companies.

"Recognizing the broadening of my responsibilities in May, when I will become president and CEO of both Nissan and Renault, I need a leadership team capable of accelerating the performance and delivery of results that has characterized Nissan over the past six years," said Ghosn.

"The new position of COO will be crucial to the success of Nissan Value-Up, and I have full confidence in Toshiyuki Shiga and the new leadership team to help me implement the next chapter of Nissan's growth," he added.

Other changes

Itaru Koeda will remain as co-chair and EVP, and chair of the management committee of affiliates. Tadao Takahashi continues as EVP in charge of manufacturing, vehicle and powertrain production engineering and supply chain management.

Hiroto Saikawa is being appointed EVP in charge of purchasing, and will become chair of the management committee of Europe. Saikawa is previously SVP for purchasing. Mitsuhiko Yamashita is appointed EVP in charge of research, technology and engineering. He is previously SVP in charge of advanced technology, environmental and safety engineering.

Carlos Tavares is appointed EVP in charge of product planning, corporate strategy, design and light commercial vehicle division and program. Tavares is previously VP in charge of product planning and strategy. Alain-Pierre Raynaud continues as SVP and global controller in charge of budget and accounting functions.

EVPs Nobuo Okubo and Norio Matsumura—two NML veterans who greatly contributed to Nissan's revival—will be retiring from the company. Patrick Pelata will be proposed to join Shemaya Levy as the second nonexecutive director of the company. Pelata, who is an EVP at NML, will be moving to Renault.

As COO starting April 1, Shiga will play a bigger role in the implementation of Nissan Value-up, the company's new mid-term plan that aims to increase global sales of Nissan worldwide to 4.3-million vehicles. Nissan Value-up will start on April this year.

Helping motor oil do its job better

"WHY do I need to add STP Oil Treatment during, or in between oil changes"? Even more so, "why use STP Oil Treatment in the first place?" These are just some of the questions motorists ask when this product is offered to them. This is usually followed by "Isn't motor oil enough?"

Your ordinary motor oil is formulated to cool engine parts, keeping them clean and prevent rust and corrosion. Its most basic, yet vital function is to provide lubrication. It does this by providing a "cushion" between moving parts which prevents harmful metal-to-metal contact and friction—a major contributor to heat and premature wear.

Motor oil breakdown

In everyday driving however, motor oils may lose their protective properties and may lead to "motor oil breakdown." This is due to heat and severe engine pressure in such parts as bearings and cylinder walls which lead to oxidation and thinning by searing (breaking) of the viscosity—improving polymers found in multi-grade oils. This not only leads to increased engine wear but decreased engine efficiency as well.

Moreover, severe engine wear that occurs over time leads to increased clearances between vital engine parts causing engine oil to enter the combustion chamber and burn, resulting in oil consumption.

Special formulation

STP, a leading name in car care products worldwide, offers STP Oil Treatment. Its special formulation of an antiwear, antifriction, antioxidant mixture increases engine protection during normal use and helps reduce oil consumption.

While maximum efficiency is obtained when STP Oil Treatment is added to fresh oil in a warm engine after an oil change, adding STP Oil Treatment in between oil changes actually replenishes and fortifies the key benefits the motor oil offers.

STP Oil Treatment increases motor oil viscosity—providing a thicker film of oil between engine parts, minimizing friction and sealing clearances leading to minimum oil consumption.

More than this, STP Oil Treatment has an antiwear, antioxidant agent which helps inhibit corrosion from certain chemicals which attack bearings and retards the oxidation process which occurs when engine oil temperatures rise—a normal occurrence in the internal combustion engine.

Korando TD

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

SAD to say, there are no brand-new three-door compact sport utility vehicles (SUVs) sold in this country. So late last year when Wheels Automall advertised in another daily a three-door 4x4 SUV called the Korando, I immediately phoned for a test drive: But the three or four units Wheels had imported from South Korea were sold out, so I had to wait until last month to get my hands on a Korando.

The Korando is one of four Ssangyong motor vehicles sold here as "The Intelligent Choice: German technology, Asian price." Car cognoscenti may remember Ssangyong as the manufacturer of the Musso SUV and the Mercedes 300 van, which sold like hotcakes some years ago because it was priced so low and sported the Mercedes-Benz insignia. This was followed by the Vito, another Ssangyong minivan with Mercedes-Benz licensed technology.

South Korea's fourth largest car manufacturer, Ssangyong began production in 1954 and celebrated its 50th anniversary last year. Aside from the Korando, the Ssangyong stable currently includes the Rexton SUV (voted Car of the Year 2004 in Malaysia), the 11-seater Rodius Stavic MPV with common rail direct injection (CRDi) diesel engine, Rhino 4x4 pickup and the flagship Chairman luxury sedan which isn't sold here.

MB engine

When you first see a Korando, chances are you'll say it's ugly with its disproportionately longish, tapering hood and flat, Jeep Wrangler-like shape. But wait till you drive it and examine its specs. The Korando is powered by a refined Mercedes-Benz- licensed 2.9-liter, 5-cylinder intercooled turbo diesel engine that is amazingly quiet and free of vibration and fumes, yet delivers 120 ps at 4,000 rpm and 258 Nm torque at 2,250 rpm.

Measuring 1,840 mm in height and 1,841 mm in width, the Korando is taller and stouter than the Honda CR-V and Toyota RAV4 but necessarily less in length since it is a 3-door SUV while the others are 5-door. This rugged little Korean SUV may not be good-looking, but it is strong. It is capable of towing as much as 2.8 tons and it proved its endurance when it scored a class win in the Baja 1,000-km desert race on its first attempt.

Despite its utilitarian appearance, the Korando provides an amazingly smooth, carlike ride, thanks to a high-quality Mercedes-designed chassis with an independent torsion bar, double wishbone front suspension and 5-link coil spring setup at the rear plus gas shock absorbers. The Korando's part-time high and low range 4-wheel-drive system is activated via a switch, so you can shift on the fly even while driving at 70 km per hour. Although ABS is optional, adequate stopping power is supplied by the Korando's power-assisted ventilated disc brakes in front and solid disc brakes at the rear.

Spartan

The smooth-shifting automatic transmission (AT) Korando loaned to me had front fog lamps, power steering and windows, air conditioning, side stepboard, catalytic converter and six-stud alloy wheels shod with P 255/70R15 Hankook tires, but no air bag (although driver's side air bag is standard in the Korandos sold in Australia), no radio/cassette or CD player, no central locking, no alarm system, no keyless entry. The interior of the Korando is spartan with light gray fabric upholstery and tall back seat headrests that block the driver's view when reversing.

On the plus side, there are armrests for the driver and front passenger, the split 50/50 rear seat backrests can be conveniently folded forward or the base folded away to increase cargo space and each door panel has a big red safety light that is clearly visible when the door is swung open. The side stepboard helps a lot when you climb in or out, given the Korando's 195 mm minimum ground clearance. The body color-keyed spare tire cover with distinctive Ssanyong insignia enhances the Korando's sporty look at the rear.

700 km per 70 liters

Safety features include integrated front and rear crumple zones, door side impact beams, a reinforced chassis and extra-high tensile strengthened car frame structure. Ssangyong claims that the Korando manual transmission (MT) averages 8.3 liters of diesel fuel per 100 km in combined city and highway driving, while the AT consumes 10.5 liters per 100 km on the average. In short, the Korando can go over 700 km per full tank of 70 liters, Ssangyong says. But I did not have the time or opportunity to check out Ssangyong's fuel-efficiency claim.

As is, sans luxurious features or creature comforts, the Korando is definitely not a cute ute for women or softroader for retirement-age males. But since the Korando, even without a visible Mercedes badge, has what it takes to pursue the "When the road ends, the fun begins" mantra, adventurous individuals who dare to be different just might consider buying it at P1.1 million for the AT or P1.05 million for the MT.

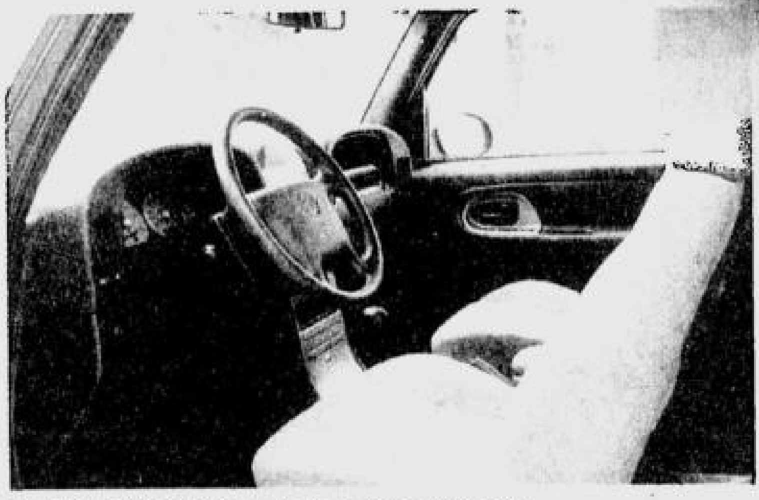
* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER SLOGAN: Housework can't kill you, but why take a chance? —Phyllis Diller

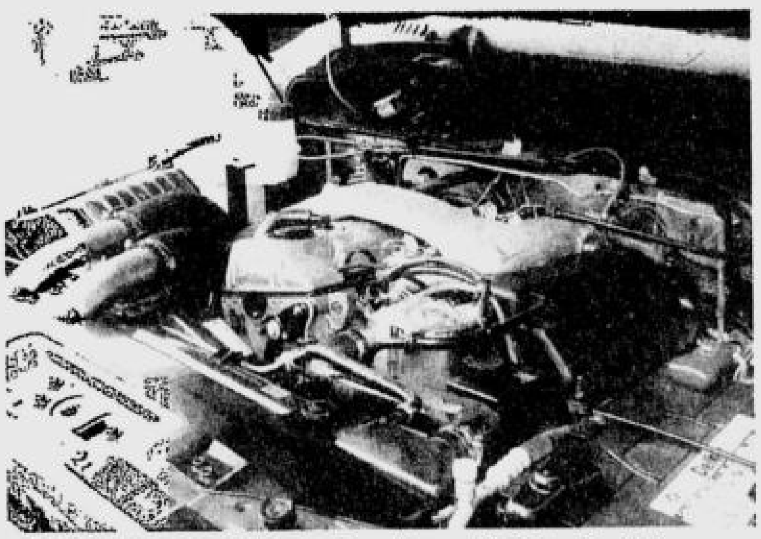
* * *

E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph.

SSANGYONG Korando isn't cute but it's strong.

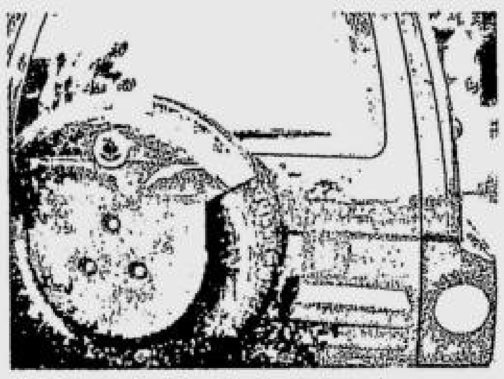


THE KORANDO'S interior is spartan but roomy.



THE KORANDO'S Mercedes-Benz-licensed 2.9-liter 5-cylinder intercooled turbo diesel engine.

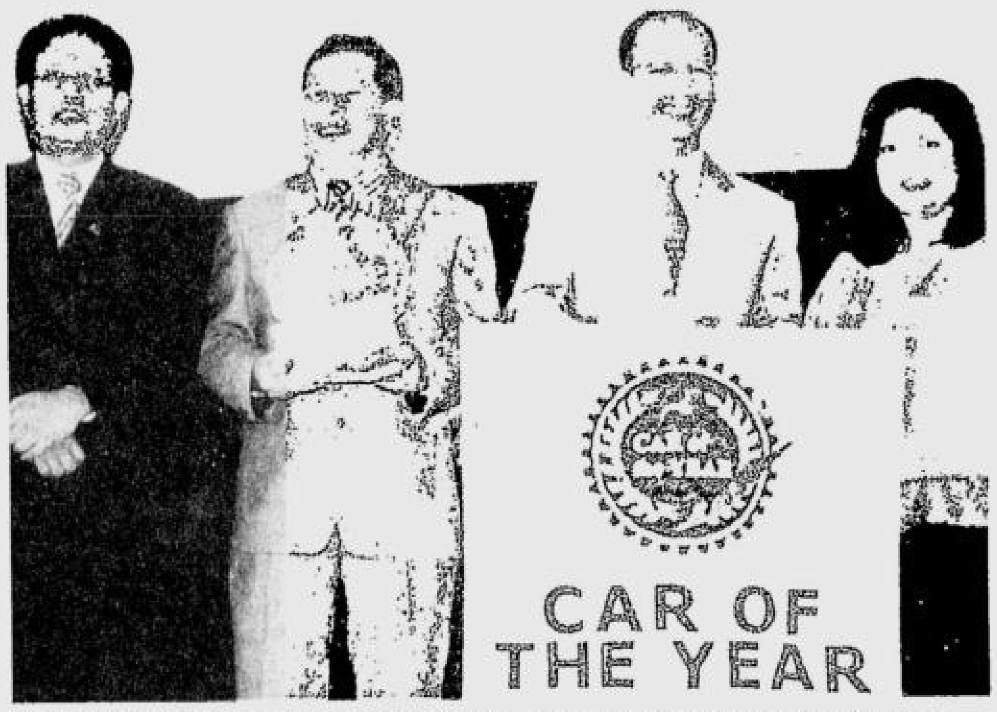
PHOTOS BY: AIDA SEVILLA-MENDOZA



NO Mercedes-Benz insignia, but the Korando has a refined Mercedes-licensed engine and chassis.

RP MOTORING MILESTONE

First Car of the Year Awards rites



TRANSPORTATION Undersecretary Ricardo Alfonso Jr. and Coty-P president Armin Amio give the Car of the Year Award to Honda Cars Philippines' Arnel Doria and Gabby Peren.

(See related story on F1)

BEST SUPER MINI OF THE YEAR
February 24, 2005
Rockwell Tent
At The Plaza

TOYOTA's Raymond Rodriguez accepts the Best Super Mini of the Year award for the 1.3-liter Toyota Vios from ANC's Gene Orejana.

BEST SUV LITE OF THE YEAR

TOP Gear Philippines editor in chief Mike Black and Graphics Magazine's Ricky Alegre give award to NMPI Marketing's Celery Camacho for Best SUV Lite for Nissan X-Trail.

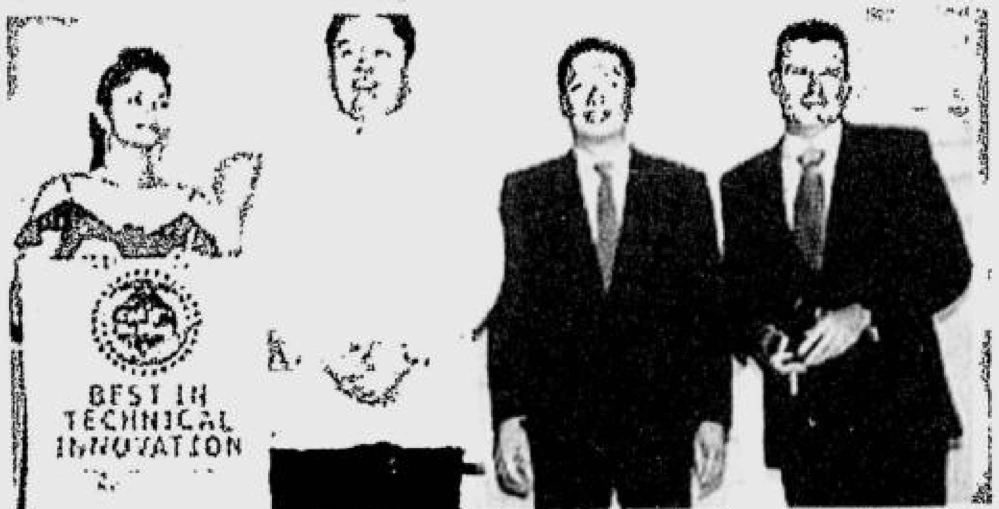
JAMES Lim, GM Automobiles Philippines president, accepts Best SUV award for Trailblazer from ABS-CBN's Ira Panganiban and Standard Insurance VP Elia Akol.

CAR of the YEAR
BEST SPORT COMPACT OF THE YEAR
February 24, 2005
Rockwell Tent
At The Plaza

FORD Group Philippines' Hazel Ludovice accepts the Best Sport Compact of the Year award for Ford RS Lynx from Rev Magazine editor Paolo Subido and racing veteran Pocholo Ramirez.

BEST AUV OF THE YEAR

MITSUBISHI'S Froy Dytianquin accepts Best AUV of the Year for Mitsubishi Adventure Grand Sport from C! editor in chief Tito Hermoso and Avante Garde's Alvin Uy.



INQUIRER Motoring's Andre Palma and Tribune's Bam Olivares give award to BMW 745 Li for Best Technical Innovation. Accepting the award is BMW's David Blue.

MOTORING

Text us your feedback: Inquirer mtr name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Blown

CATCH MY DRIFT

Andre Palma

UPON hearing the term Forced Induction, many will tend to think that this is some sort of sadomasochistic fetish, bordering on criminal, and a sure sign of Internet driven perversion. Motoring enthusiasts who react excitedly to this term though, should not be punished and labeled as deviants, "letting their freak-flags fly," so to speak.

Instead of dealing with whips, chains and gimps, forced induction refers to a system of increasing engine output by delivering more air to the combustion process. I hope my next statement passes the censors, but the whole concept of forced induction revolves around the concept of "being blown."

When the pressure of the air headed for combustion is sufficiently massive (often playing somewhere around one Bar of atmosphere), and supplemented with an adequate amount of fuel via an upgraded flow or larger injectors, more power is made. The proverbial "bang" in your combustion chamber is bigger because of the greater amount of energy latent in the high pressure fuel and air cocktail of a "blown" engine.

2 sides

The two sides of the forced induction coin are what are commonly referred to as either superchargers or turbochargers. Each works on the basic theory stated earlier, but the methods of induction, driving feel and yield of each are very different.

An argument started between proponents of each school of "charging" would spawn volumes of debate.

Superchargers

Supercharging involves the use of pulleys and belts centered around the main drive pulley (the one attached to your crankshaft) and the pulley on the actual "blower" of the supercharger. As the revolutions of the main drive pulley increase, this turns the pulley on the blower allowing an increased pressurized airflow to occur.

Since the blower is directly attached to the intake manifold of engine, pressure is easily managed and preserved. Other systems, such as the air-conditioner's compressor, attached to the main drive pulley, also affect the efficiency of the supercharger in a phenomenon known as "parasitic drag."

The plus side of a supercharger is a very linear availability of the additional power, due to the direct drive relationship of the blower to the engine's crank, via the main drive pulley.

Turbochargers

Turbochargers are less obviously mechanical and rely on exhaust pressure gases to provide the motivation for the increased airflow. This is done via a two-cavity unit (lovingly called the "slug" because it looks like a snail) with fan-like blades in each of the chambers; one complement on the intake side and one on the exhaust side.

As the exhaust gas pressure increases and drives the exhaust chamber blades, the connected intake chamber blades then suck more air into the intake manifold. All this comes to a crescendo when the correct level of air pressure is reached and the turbo achieves ideal boost.

All this dependence on pressure automatically requires a leak-proof system for an efficient turbo. Power availability is not linear and very different from the mechanical supercharger.

One must wait for the turbo to spool, allowing it to reach a certain number of revolutions per minute (rpm's), before the correct level of pressure is achieved. From idle until the correct spooling and eventual boost is achieved, a turbocharged car drives tamely. As the optimum pressures are reached and as the turbo achieves a correct spool speed, power is then instantaneously and quite obviously introduced.

With the increased available power also comes a greater maintenance responsibility due to the larger amount of heat generated by forced induction systems. The use of an intercooler, a heat exchanger much like a simple radiator, is a common way of dealing with the excess heat generated by turbos. Intercoolers use heat sinks and air flow passing over its fins to remove heat from the system.

Lubricant oils

Synthetic and dry lubricant oils are another way to help protect forced induction engines from damage. As the output of the engine increases, so does the actual physical load on its internals.

Oils that are resistant to break down and maintain their lubricating properties under the harshest circumstances are a must. Inferior oils automatically spell doom for a blown car. An oil cooler can also be used to exchange the heat of the oil with ambient air, much like the aforementioned intercooler.

Examples of these blown cars are present on our roads. The supercharging faction is well represented by selected models from the Jaguar and Mercedes-Benz stables. Turbos adorn the engine bays of humble people movers, like the Hyundai Starex CRDi, all the way to the almost make-believe realm of Evos, Imprezas and 911 Turbos.

Kits

Enthusiasts also install forced induction systems on cars that were not originally equipped from the showroom. Complete kits are available for a selection of cars from large aftermarket manufacturers like Trust, HKS, Jackson Racing and F-MAX.

Some shops put together do-it-yourself kits, mostly turbochargers, and cater to many different sizes of trust funds. The quality of locally assembled turbo systems varies from the crude to almost "works" team, WRC level installations.

Finally, a word of caution to the enthusiast considering an aftermarket turbo kit: please choose a capable shop. You will need a certified shop manual for your car at the very least, and a dynamometer, at best, for a proper working installation. The wrong choice could result in a truly blown engine; complete with your own personal smoke screen and rare, but nonetheless spectacular pyrotechnics.

The Mild Seven Renault Formula One season begins

THE RACERS won't hit the tracks until the first week of March but for the Mild Seven Renault Team, the 2005 Formula One (F1) season is well underway.

Earlier this month at a launch at the Grimaldi Forum, a posh convention center in Monaco, attended by some 600 guests and partners, the Mild Seven Renault F1 Team unveiled the brand-new R25, a new driver pairing, and the ambitious goals for the year.

New rules, new car

At the heart of the R25 is a brand-new RS25 engine; 98 percent of this engine is composed of newly developed and freshly engineered parts. This 72-degree V10 engine was designed with a reliability target of over 1,400 km in mind—twice as far as the 700-km target of the RS24 engine used last year.

The RS25 also has a significantly lower center of gravity than its predecessor, and has not gained weight in spite of its doubled life cycle. These improvements make the R25 more balanced and maneuverable across different tracks.

Rule changes

The revisions on engine specifications were brought about by rule changes for the 2005 F1 season that requires teams to use a single engine for two complete race weekends.

Old rules allowed one engine per race weekend. This year, any team that uses a new engine over successive race weekends incurs a penalty of being sent 10 places back on the starting grid.

Other league rule changes also limit teams to one set of tires for qualifying and race day while placing restrictions on certain aerodynamic components. These changes have compelled the Mild Seven Renault engineers to rework the aerodynamics of the R25.

The R25 is visually different from its predecessor in that it has a narrower nose and smaller sidepods. However, it retains many of the body features of the R24 which are the result of hundreds of hours of wind tunnel research. The team also developed a new front suspension mounting point where the body connects with the chassis.

"In Formula One, you always need to be moving forward, questioning your approach and getting better. Our two technical centers are in perfect synergy and this is reflected in the engine-chassis integration of the R25. The team has done a very impressive job," said managing director Flavio Briatore referring to the output of the two development centers of the Mild Seven Renault F1 Team in Viry-Châtillon, France and Enstone, England.

Another major improvement for the R25 is an all-new electronics unit called "Step 11." This new computer module has four times greater processing power and can collect 10 times as much data compared to last year's unit. "Step 11" is one hundred times faster and can store 1,000 times more information than a desktop computer.

New pair, new goals

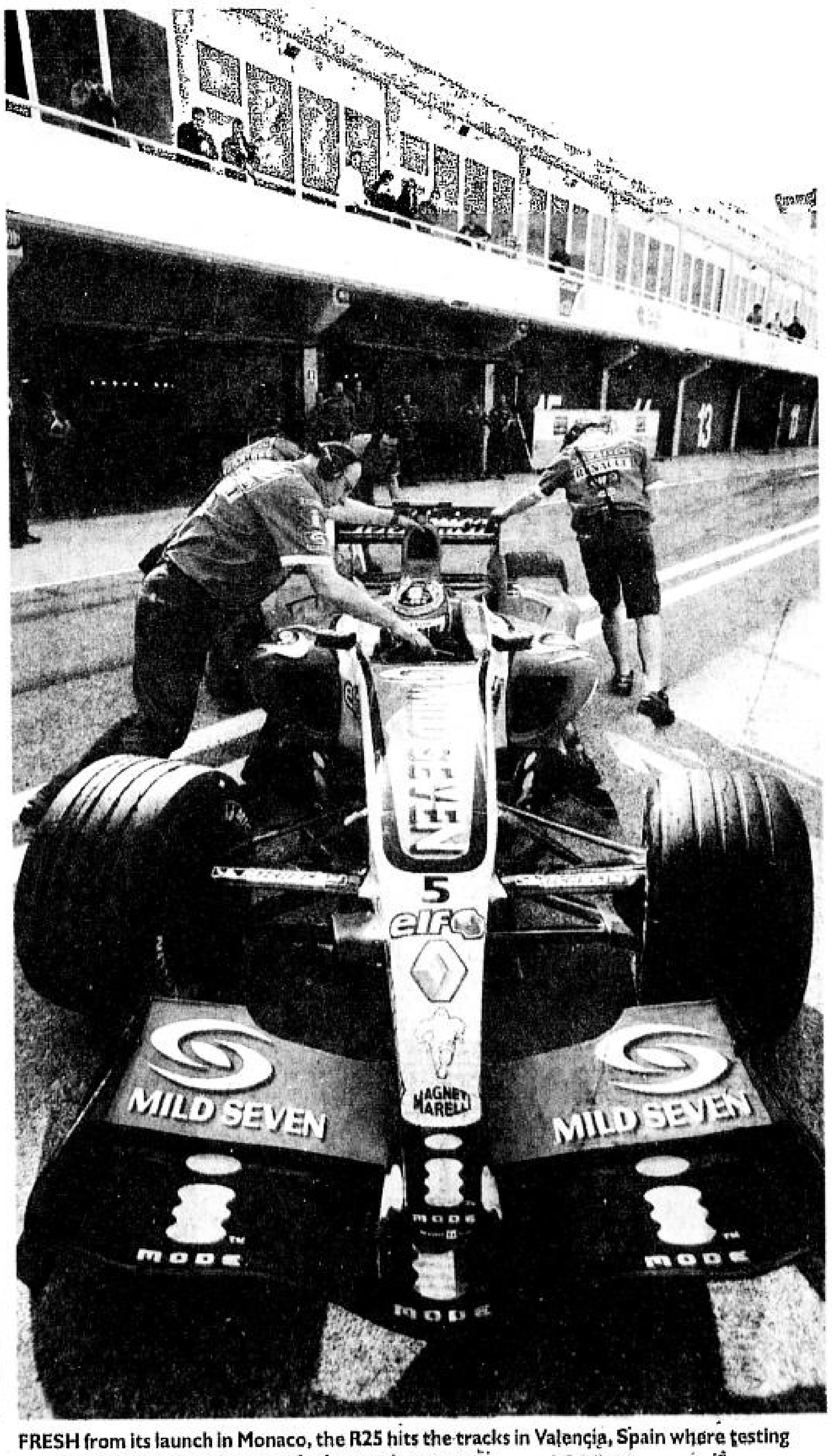
Along with its new hardware, the Mild Seven Renault F1 Team features a new driver pairing as Spanish sensation Fernando Alonso teams up with Italian veteran Giancarlo Fisichella, who drove for Benetton, which is now known as Mild Seven Renault.

"As part of our team philosophy, we expect total dedication and performance from every team member, and that begins with our drivers. They are responsible for the efforts of many people who work tirelessly to give them a winning car," said Briatore.

Last year, the team aimed to carve its place as one of the top three teams in the sport. Mild Seven Renault F1 Team was able to achieve this objective finishing third while stiffly competing for second place throughout most of the season. Alonso and Fisichella are expected to deliver even better results by vying for second this year.

"No longer will we be satisfied to be regular podium finishers. This season, we must take regular race wins. Since Renault's return to Formula One in 2002, we have set ambitious objectives. We have achieved them each time, and I believe we can deliver on our promises once again. We want to be fighting for the world title in 2005-2006, which means we must be among the teams who can compete with Ferrari on an equal footing this year," concluded Mild Seven Renault Team chair Patrick Faure.

THE BRAND-NEW Mild Seven Renault F1 Team R25 racer, which will compete in the 2005 season, was recently unveiled in Monaco.



FRESH from its launch in Monaco, the R25 hits the tracks in Valencia, Spain where testing results will determine the areas for improvement.